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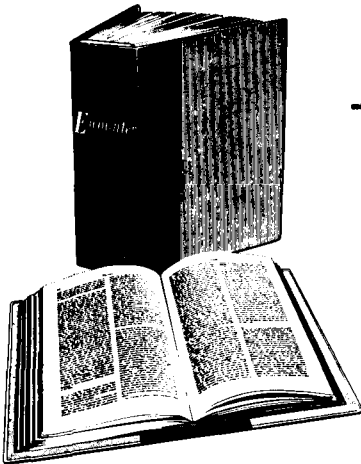
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Doves

IN THE EVENINGS I would see him going through the grey streets on his visits to some house, a black figure moving slowly along by a wall in the sunshine, head downcast, almost one with his shadow. From time to time when he came to some children playing on waste ground, he would stop, gathering his breath, and as the breeze whipped the soutane about his legs, he'd watch their games with tired, hooded eyes. Sometimes, with a curl of his finger, he would beckon a boy or a girl and say something to the child, perhaps fetching a peppermint from his pocket. There was always about him the faint aroma of mints mingled with the pungent odour of carbolic soap. I never liked this smell. Even at the altar rail when he stooped to place the Host on my tongue I could detect first the soap from his hands and then traces of mint.

I could not help it but I thought him a stupid old man. The way my mother fussed over him whenever he came to our house annoyed me. Each time he took the same seat which faced the window and with a sigh let himself slowly down. And my mother would appear in the scullery doorway with the teapot in her hands and ask if Father would take a cup of tea. Muttering about the weather, he would look round and hesitate before speaking.

"... er ... tea now ... I'm swimming in tea, you know. ..."

And my mother would say: "Of course, Father. Maybe something else, Father. ...?"

He'd give a dry, asthmatic chuckle and say:

"Mrs Kennedy gives us any amount of cups of tea, bless her ... but. ..."

With a curious kind of smile he'd glance at the sideboard.

"Would you touch a glass of sherry maybe, Father, if it's not too early?" my mother would respond.

"I have to be watching my time", he'd warn,

but even as he was still speaking my mother would produce the bottle and a glass.

Sometimes she spoke to him as if he were a child, her own backward child, hovering attentively, hands at the ready, bending over him, her voice tuned up so that he would hear as she watched the crumbs tumble down over his priestly lap. And I always thought it bold of her, even improper, when she brushed these crumbs away from his person.

"Dear, dear", he'd mutter, "don't fuss yourself, now", and all the while he would gaze over her head through the window at the pigeons on the wall beyond.

I HAD COME in early from school one day at the beginning of Lent when I heard voices in the living room. My aunt was there, sitting as she always did, on the edge of her seat.

"You couldn't deny him his little pleasure, they have few enough, goodness. ..." my mother was saying.

"I agree", my aunt replied, "but they do have to be careful."

She glanced sharply across at me as I lingered over my tea, half-listening.

"One thing leads to another", my aunt went on mysteriously.

They sat drinking tea and gossiping about people in the parish until their silences grew longer and were filled by the ticking of the clock and the drowsy muttering of the pigeons at the window. Then, jerking her head in a way I'd often seen, my aunt reached for her handbag and said:

"Just the same, you shouldn't encourage him. ..."

My mother looked at her.

"Encourage him? How do you mean?" she asked, puzzled.

I pretended not to listen.

"Ssh!" hissed my aunt, and leaning closer to my mother, "you know he's never out of Crolla's shop . . . every other day . . . you know that, don't you?"

Lifting her face slightly, my mother said: "You don't say . . ." and then secretly, "is that so, Mary?"

In a louder, more business-like voice, my aunt announced: "Don't say you weren't warned!"

She snapped her handbag shut and got up with a sudden graceless movement.

"And how's this one doing at school?" she turned to me.

"Oh, never worry about that madam", said my mother crisply as she rose to see our visitor to the door. She cast her eyes to the ceiling with a laboured sigh.

"Honestly . . . I don't know. . ."

But my aunt smiled at me confidentially. "Still at the Latin?"

At this my mother made a derisive and impatient sound. I nodded but did not speak.

"Amo, amas, amat", sang my aunt rapidly, standing in the doorway, pulling on her gloves. "Stick at it!"

When she had gone I thought about her remarks and guessed that they referred to Father O'Hanlon. Crolla's shop was an Italian grocer's in Leith Walk which sold wines and spirits. In view of my aunt's veiled warning I was surprised to see the sherry bottle and the familiar glass on the table once again a few days later. Father O'Hanlon sat in his usual place facing the window. In his hands he held a letter which he began to fold away.

"Well now, that's very favourable, I'd say", he concluded with some satisfaction, and reached a hand towards the glass of wine. I watched as he raised it slowly to his moist lips, trembling slightly.

"Your good health now", he muttered.

My mother bowed her head, perhaps to look away, as he sipped the amber wine. Neither of them paid any attention to me.

"We must keep our prayers up all the same", said Father O'Hanlon, running his tongue quickly over his lips, "a true vocation is rare enough these days."

"Yes Father", my mother sounded very feeble.

"God answers our prayers in His own good time. He knows what's best", he paused, smiling vaguely, "in the long run. . ."

He took another sip of the sherry and again the strange smile played about his mouth.

"He surely does. . ." His voice trailed away faintly.

He seemed to gaze upon the pigeons at the window sill as if transfixed. I had noticed this before and on each occasion his mouth opened a little and he was perfectly still. Eventually, after sitting like this for a minute or so, he said very slowly and with great deliberation:

"Would you ever look at those doves? Aren't they lovely things, eh . . . God's creatures?"

I thought it an odd thing to say. And I was struck by the way he used the word "doves"; it had a strange, pleasant curl to it in his soft Irish accent. It was a word I had encountered only in books; it made me think of certain poems though I had forgotten their names. My mother glanced round at the window, frowning.

"They're a nuisance, Father."

Later, when my brother came in from play, my mother called him in to the priest and I was asked to leave the room while they talked together in private.

MY AUNT LIVED at Comely Bank in a third-floor flat which overlooked some playing fields. It was a pleasant, residential part of the city and, after coming from Leith, I always noticed how fresh and clean the houses and streets seemed. Although there had been someone before the war, my father's sister had never married. She was very religious but she did not go to church as often as my mother who went almost every day to Mass. But, like my mother, she was always cleaning things, washing, dusting and making tidy. At some time she had learned to play the piano and my mother thought this was "foolishness" and said that she was always a little above herself. Though she seldom played, a large piano stood in her front room and she kept it polished. On top there was a small, framed photograph of a man in uniform. She called her front room the sitting-room and it had a high ceiling, lace screens and heavy velvet curtains over the windows and smelled of fresh polish.

"You left this", I said to her at the door. "My mother sent it."

She took the neatly wrapped packet.

"My scarf it'll be", she said, "silly me to go and forget it. Come in."

She laid the scarf on a side table in the hallway and looked at me.

"Well, you're certainly growing, aren't you?"

I must have shown confusion or blushed a little then for she took me by the arm and said comfortingly: "Oh well, never mind. Soon enough, I expect."

I was not certain what she meant by these remarks. She was given to strange sayings and secret allusions and as children we thought her quite odd.

"Well then", she began briskly, when we were seated in her sitting-room, "and tell me what's been happening?"

But before I could speak or think of what to say, she went on: "You must be very pleased about Michael's vocation? He's going to a boarding school in England—you'll miss him."

She studied my face for some response but I had nothing to say.

"Your mother will need all the help she can get, I expect."

I was puzzled by a feeling of disappointment. She spoke only of my brother and his vocation, almost repeating the priest's words, saying what a great blessing it was for a family to give a son to the Church. She said that we must all feel very proud of Michael and of the whole family, my parents especially. Perhaps my father would be able to find a job nearer to Edinburgh. Now he would have to pay for my brother's education in England where he would be taught by Brothers and priests.

"A lot of changes", she shook her head sadly.

I felt my disappointment harden into a kind of bitterness. In spite of her odd way of putting things, I had always liked my aunt for she had somehow seemed different from my mother. Yet now she appeared to be much the same. I wondered how I could have been deceived into thinking that there was any real difference between them. My aunt watched me silently. As if in a dream I heard the muffled chimes of the longcase clock in the hall. My aunt shrugged.

"Perhaps one day after he's ordained, he'll come back and say a Mass specially for us", she mused, half to herself. Then resuming her address to me: "That'll be a long time yet."

There was something peculiar about the way she spoke to me and looked at me; it was as if she was unable to decide who I was. At one moment she would speak to me as if I were an adult and the next as if I were a child. I do not know what put the idea into my head at that moment but almost without realising it, I said suddenly: "I've heard a voice. . . ."

LOOKING STRAIGHT into her eyes I was reminded of the grey eyes of the pigeons at home. She sat upright before me, but said nothing so that for a while I thought perhaps she hadn't heard for I recalled that she was hard of hearing in one ear.

"In church", I added, louder, "at the statue of Our Lady."

"You heard a voice? What do you mean?"

I told her that I had heard a voice inside my head when looking at the statue of Our Lady a couple of evenings earlier. Even as I spoke the words I did not know what had prompted them.

"And what did the voice say?" asked my aunt, smiling tolerantly. I hesitated, still unsure of what I was saying. The vague, warm sensation of sin suffused itself through my flesh, causing my skin to tingle; I felt as if I had admitted to some dark and shameless rites, things which could only be revealed in the secrecy of the confessional, whispered in the gloom of a silent church. The sense of excitement was intense and delicious.

"I am not to tell", I said at length.

I thought that my aunt might be angry for at once the smile vanished. I explained that the voice had told me something which I was to reveal only to a priest and in secrecy.

"A message?" said my aunt.

I nodded slowly and explained that it had happened just after evening confessions. I had told no one yet.

For some time she looked at me closely and then got up and went to the window. As I waited for her to speak I wondered where the idea had come from but all I could think of was how my aunt had echoed the priest's words about what a great blessing it was for an ordinary home to give a son to the priesthood. I remembered too what my aunt had said about the need for priests to be careful and her warning to my mother not to

encourage him. I thought also about Michael going away after summer to a school run by Brothers and what it would be like when he was gone.

"Are you sure about this, Eileen?" my aunt asked softly. I assured her that I was in earnest.

"Then", she said solemnly, "you must tell your mother when you get home. You must!"

Slowly she came across to me. There was a strange look in her eyes. I thought it was a look of pity. She made me promise to tell my mother and it seemed important to her. There was a pleading note in her voice and I realised, though dimly at first, that I had touched upon some deep and hidden seam of feeling.

She made tea and brought it on a tray with a plate of biscuits and two slices of fruit cake. I responded to her questions about my lessons and the teachers at school but she seemed distracted and began to repeat herself. Once or twice I noticed that she was watching me from the corner of her eye. But although I knew she was thinking of what I had said, she did not mention the voice again during tea. Suddenly she put her teacup down with a clatter, clasped her hands together and fell to her knees.

"We'll say a wee prayer", she confided, closing her eyes.

"What for?" I asked, my mouth full of cake.

"Come on", she urged.

I went on my knees to please her and she began the Hail Mary. I joined in but only half-heartedly.

"For the conversion of Scotland", she whispered, making the sign of the cross and rising to her chair again. We went on with tea as if nothing had happened.

As I was leaving she began to fuss over me, making certain that my coat was properly fastened and my woollen hat was pulled down over my ears. She seemed to have quite forgotten about my brother and his vocation. On the landing outside her door her hands alighted gently on my head and with a look of sudden madness, she breathed fervently: "Who knows, you may be blessed . . . like Margaret Sinclair. . ."

Bidding me wait, she hurried in again and returned in a moment with a small plastic effigy of Our Lady from which she shook a few drops of holy water over me. Then, touching her brow and shoulders furtively and quickly, she blessed herself, glancing

apprehensively at the other door on the landing. I made the sign of the cross too, said goodbye to my aunt and went downstairs to the street.

On the bus home I went upstairs to hear the records. Some boys came on, laughing and cheerful, but I was too shy to look at them. When one of them said something to me in passing, I blushed. I thought of the promise which my aunt had extracted and wondered if I would fulfill it. I recalled that at primary school a girl had once claimed that she had seen the statue of the Virgin move as if rocking the infant Jesus. A missionary priest had come to the class and had exhibited a long, black iron nail which, he explained, was a replica of the nails from the true cross that had been driven through the sacred flesh of Our Saviour. We kissed the rough, heavy nail and looked upon it as upon the finger of God. This girl had seemed particularly affected and following her claim, she stayed off school for a few days. But then nothing more was heard of the matter.

THAT NIGHT I had a strange dream. I dreamed that I was walking through the streets in daytime with my head held high and that people were turning to look at me. At first I did not know why they were staring or what it was about me that had attracted their attention. But I knew somehow that they were not looking at my face. I thought that I must be wearing something odd but when I looked down I saw only my school uniform. Sometimes I seemed to be in streets which I recognised near home and I even caught sight, here and there, of someone I knew. But then the familiar streets faded and I was alone walking in bright gardens between high banks of flowers. Yet something was wrong for I began to feel curious movements below my blouse as if something warm and alive were stirring there. Looking down I saw two swellings, both quite large, and noticed that my blouse was stretched to contain them. I felt both fear and excitement but most of all shame for it was at these that the people were gazing. The weight of these swellings made me want to raise my hands to give support, but, with so many eyes upon me, I dared not. It was as if these tumescent breasts were alive and almost separate from my body; I felt them straining

beneath the thin cotton to be free, to show themselves. I tried to draw my jacket over but it would no longer reach and I grew more disturbed. More people appeared, men and women, glancing and openly leering at these rising, turbulent breasts. When my blouse began to open at the top button I was near to tears. Hot spasms of shame and panic swept over me when I realised the breasts were emerging into view. I thought I should faint as I tried desperately to hold them in but as my hands reached them, another button parted and my blouse opened further.

Then a very strange thing happened. As I tried to grasp them the breasts were transformed under my hands into two separate, moving creatures. Instead of two breasts I held two soft, living birds, warm and plump. At once they escaped from my hands and were in flight. A little heavily at first they flapped, but then swiftly they mounted the warm air. I watched them rise into the sky, filled with astonishment and relief. Then there was no one looking at me—there was no one. I awoke confused and bewildered by feelings of relief and loss and could not fall asleep again until nearly dawn.

FOR TWO DAYS I did not keep my promise to my aunt. But I began to fear that when my aunt visited our house again she would tell my mother. As I had feared my mother's reaction was sceptical. She made me sit down and tell the whole story twice over. Then she interrogated me. Finally she said bitingly:

"Well, I don't believe you. If you ask me, you're making it up—looking for attention."

But I denied this.

"We'll see", she said, turning into the tiny scullery, "but don't you go about telling people this. What will they think?"

Above the rattle of pots and dishes I heard her calling: "I'll get to the bottom of this, don't you worry. . . ." I knew it was a threat.

Nothing more was said for a day or so but mother's disapproval was evident and, at times, almost palpable. Yet I suspected that there was something else on her mind other than what I had told her. I felt that she resented the fact of my existence as a person, as if, in some way, I had become a problem, a burden.

On Saturday morning I went to the library and on my return my mother gave me an ominous look.

"Father O'Hanlon's here", she said, "he wants to see you in your room."

I had already noticed the sherry bottle on the sideboard but, as there was no glass nearby, I assumed that the priest had gone before me. That he was still in the house confused me and that he was waiting in my room filled me with apprehension.

"Why is he in my room?" I asked, offended at the intrusion in my absence.

My mother turned angrily.

"Why shouldn't he be?" she snapped. "Who do you think you are?"

I protested that it was my room but she ignored me.

He was standing by the window waiting for me. As I went in he turned and smiled. There was a smell of mint and carbolic. I stood just inside my room.

"Hallo, hallo, come in Eileen", he began.

I resented the way he stood in the window blocking the light and throwing his shadow across the room.

"This is a fine room you have all to yourself", he commented, looking round. "You have everything handy enough, all your books and whatnot."

"Yes Father", I mumbled.

Slowly he drew a chair over and sat down. He was frowning.

"Sit down, child", he said wearily, nodding in my direction.

My resentment increased even more at this command. I wanted to tell him that I was not a child, that he was in my room. I wanted him to go and leave me alone but I knew it was all futile.

He began at first to talk about my brother, repeating the things I'd heard him say so often to my mother. And as he spoke I found myself acquiescing feebly without thought or reflection, to everything he said. And everything he said seemed to be a repetition of something he had already said and as the words and phrases recurred I began to lose my bearings, to lose track of my own thoughts and feelings so that I could no longer judge whether I had been listening to the hypnotic rise and fall of his voice for a few minutes only, or for an hour. And with time circling upon itself, his

language also seemed to contract to a small compass in which we were both trapped. At times I sensed that he was not speaking to me at all but had forgotten my presence and was mesmerised by his own voice and was unable to stop.

He spoke of the task facing the Church and of how important the family was in that task. It was from the ordinary homes, he said, that the best priests came and the best boys went forward to the priesthood—the humblest homes more often than not. The home was of the greatest importance and not every home, no matter how good that home might be, was blessed to give a son to God. That home was special for the spirit of the Holy Ghost was dwelling in it. Everyone was praying for my brother, he said, for the power of prayer was indeed truly wonderful. It was a good thing for the parish to have a vocation at this time for it set an example and, where one had gone, others could follow. Our prayers would help make that first vocation stronger.

At times I made an effort to listen although his discourse seemed aimless. Yet always it returned to the same point, the same sentence, the same word. And then I was lost once more as if he had drawn about me a shifting, intangible maze. By whatever route he went, he arrived always at the same destination which was always the point from which he had set out. Each thing he said seemed to me to be something else repeated and I could make no distinctions. All his sentences had become one sentence though I could never quite understand what that sentence really meant or referred to. Likewise all his words were really one word, but that word remained imprecise and indeterminate, though mysteriously redolent of innumerable days which lingered about me. My thoughts and feelings were no longer my own but belonged to another who, though residing in me, was yet not me but an incarnate alien controlled by the priest's voice. For a moment a surge of mad fear overran me and I thought that the old priest was inside me, that he had entered not just my room but also my body, that I was invaded and utterly overcome. He was within me, I was his prisoner and he would never leave and wherever I went, I would never be alone with myself. His dark form, there in my room, sitting by the window, had spread itself inside me and I was no longer owner of my thoughts or my flesh.

EVENTUALLY he must have stood up for I became aware that he was pacing slowly to and fro. I began to feel nervous. He asked me then to relate in my own words what I had told my mother and I explained about the voice as calmly as I was able. But I mumbled or spoke too softly for he halted and said abruptly:

"Speak up now, speak up and let's hear what you say."

I repeated my account and he nodded and resumed pacing back and forth.

"There was something your mother mentioned about a message, isn't that right now? And what kind of message would that be?"

"A secret message", I replied very quietly.

"A secret one, oh! A secret one, do you tell me now. . . ?"

He went on muttering about this as if he set some store by it but I knew that he did not believe me.

"And tell me Eileen, has this happened before, this voice?"

I shook my head.

"The first time, eh?" he said with some emphasis, "the first time so, you tell me. Well now, that's interesting, very interesting so it is. . . ."

He stopped in front of me and after a pause I looked up. He did not seem to notice that I was watching him. He seemed quite distracted for his mouth hung open a little and he stood quite still. I could hear a distant sighing in his lightly drawn breath. Those eyes, as if focused elsewhere, were not looking at me but into me and I felt myself blushing. I realised then that he was not looking at my face but at my body and I turned away in embarrassment. He began pacing again and spoke about God who sometimes sent signs as He had done at Lourdes and at Fatima, and he said that such things were very serious and had to be properly investigated by the Church. Yet when he stopped again at the window after a minute or so, I felt fresh tremors in my limbs and my whole body grew tense. I scarcely dared to look round but when I did, he was staring again at something just outside the window. As before his mouth was slightly open and the strange half-smile appeared.

"Aren't they wonderful, the way they sit out there all day?" he said quietly, his lips hardly moving.

His voice reached me from very far away. I saw the birds then, two grey pigeons on the warm sill and I could not take my eyes from them. There was something about the birds, some unreal quality which fascinated me yet made me afraid.

"Lovely things, the doves", Father O'Hanlon was saying in a kind of chuckle, "I always remember them at home. You'd want to take them in your hands, they're so soft and gentle..." The window sash was already open a few inches and he reached to push it up further.

"Let's just see..." he whispered.

I felt my heart beat faster and hot flushes swept over my face. My skin began to tingle as I saw his hand move below the open window and creep towards the pigeons.

"Come, my lovely", he muttered, "aren't you a fine thing now..."

Involuntarily I put my hands up to my breast and remembered the strange dream which had woken me. For a moment, staring in fear and confusion at the priest's outstretched hand, I thought I was still in the dream. I wanted to call out to prevent him from touching them but was unable to move my tongue. Suddenly the pigeons fluttered out of reach and took to the air. For a moment Father O'Hanlon watched them rising, his face transfigured by forlorn disappointment, before bringing his arm in. But I couldn't stop the trembling which shook my body and I flung myself down on the bed in tears so great was my relief. As I sobbed I heard his voice from the foot of the bed making a puzzled attempt to console me but my crying streamed from somewhere deep inside my body. I knew that something irrevocable had happened to me and that nothing could ever redeem this new solitude and loss. Shortly after, the door of my room closed quietly behind him.

I had finished crying when my mother came in with a cup of tea. She asked if I were feeling better and I was surprised to detect a note of compunction. She did not mention the voice or Father O'Hanlon. I drank the tea in silence and she stood, hands folded, watching me as if contrite about something. When I went into the living room the sherry bottle was no longer on the sideboard and Father O'Hanlon had gone.

CERTAIN CHANGES SEEMED to affect the family after this and nothing was ever quite the same again. My mother became more religious than ever and a distinct austerity and suspicion seemed to emanate from her. Now she was hurrying to Mass every morning in the week and often to services in the evening as well. Often she spoke to me about my clothes and warned against any immodesty. If I went to the mirror to brush my hair she watched me and called me away. I was to be on my guard especially against boys at school. And sometimes she inspected my appearance before my going out and made me change if she felt there was anything unsuitable about my dress. Father O'Hanlon did not call as often as before, and after Easter Michael went every day to the priests' house behind the church. My father found work in Edinburgh and though he was at home more, he still worked late in the evenings and most weekends to save for my brother's school fees. Then, one day at the beginning of August, we had a going-away tea for my brother with one or two of his school friends invited. Next morning we took a taxi to Waverley to see him off.

After Michael was gone Father O'Hanlon hardly ever came to the house and we saw less and less of him in the parish. It was known that he was in ill health. But sometimes in the confessional I could smell traces of peppermint or carbolic and, guessing that it was his voice, I imagined those grey, hooded eyes beyond the grill. Then we heard that he had stumbled on an unlit stair, had fallen and broken some bones. For a long time he was in the Deaconess Hospital and each Sunday women in the parish took turns to visit.

On the Sunday before Saint Andrew's Day a diocesan letter from the Archbishop was read out at Mass. It urged us to strengthen our prayers for the conversion of Scotland to the true faith. It was followed by an announcement that Father O'Hanlon, who had served so many years in the parish, was to retire on account of his failing health. He would be remembered with affection especially among the sick and the elderly, said the priest. We should also remember him in our prayers. Immediately after the priest came down from the pulpit, a collection was taken up for the ailing priest. The plates passed quickly among the congregation and were soon filled. To my surprise, I saw my mother slip a tightly-folded

note into the laden plate.

"He's better off where he is", asserted my mother when Mass was coming out. "At least he'll be properly looked after."

I stood shivering in the cold wind, on the fringe of the little group of women.

"He wasn't really fit for the work any longer", said Mrs Sweeney, "took too much out of himself."

Someone said: "You couldn't help but admire him; he was one of the old stock, just the same."

As we walked towards the street they commented on the good he had done in the parish and how everyone had a kind word to say for him. They spoke of him as if he were not merely gone from them but was already dead.

"He was a very gentle man, if you see what I mean. . . ?" said Mrs Carmichael.

This met with a consensus of approval.

Reaching the street they stopped for a last exchange while waiting on the men.

"Yes", remarked my mother abstractly, "he loved the pigeons, so he did. . . ."

"Is that so?" said Mrs Sweeney.

"They reminded him of his childhood", my mother confirmed, "in Ireland, you know."

"Of course", said the others, nodding slowly.

My mother looked to me for verification.

"He always had a word for the pigeons, isn't that right?"

They all turned to receive my meek assent. Mrs Carmichael said: "You couldn't help but admire him all the same. . . ."

And I heard another murmuring: "... it's a hard life for them. . . ."

They were smiling upon me then and I saw their smiles were those of a fateful and profound complicity.

A Grand Design

*"It will quite eclipse Napoleon"
(The Prince Regent to Nash,
on his plan for Regent's Park)*

A perfumed handkerchief,
a bedspread of silk, a park.
His sun-sleeked horse carries him,

the sea-side Prince,
away from affairs of state
at a glorious, graceful canter.

He's a great taker of air.
Perhaps he was the founder
of the three-hour lunch-hour.

In his memory, two glasses
kiss in a buried wine-bar.
He has left an art of dalliance,

its lovely formalities:
a path broad as four coaches,
a bank of encrimsoned silver,

drawn swords of fleur-de-lys,
ducks in fancy-dress,
footmen and maids abandoned in the grass.

Carol Rumens

Amos Oz

From Jerusalem to Cairo

Escaping from the Shadow of the Past

THIS is not a message with yet another "programme for peace." It is not written by a politician, and it contains no new proposals about borders, autonomy, or security. I hope that politicians on all sides will find in their hearts the patience, imagination, courage and wisdom needed to bring the peace agreement to full and final fruition. That is their task.

There is one task which the politicians cannot perform and which they are under no obligation to attempt, and that is to scrutinise the past, the sources of hatred and the well-springs of suspicion, with the aim of clearing away the stereotypes and understanding the soul of the other side. This task falls to the lot of the poets and thinkers, the writers and intellectuals. The politicians must not be allowed to touch the painful past, in case they make of it an explosive which is liable to endanger both the present and the future. Politicians are under an obligation to erase the past.

But intellectuals cannot erase it. Poets have to reopen the old wounds and squeeze out the pus. Thinkers have to interpret the ideology of the other side, as it is in reality and not as it is portrayed by the propagandists. Writers are able—and therefore obliged—to lay bare the soul of the man who confronts them, his beliefs, his hopes and his fears. I do not in this article profess to describe the Israel-Arab conflict "objectively." I am not an historian, and I do not claim to understand the whole truth. I

am a Jew, an Israeli, a Zionist, who belongs to the moderate Left in Israel. I have twice taken part in wars. I was privileged to witness President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, the signing of the peace agreement and the exchange of ambassadors between Israel and Egypt. I hope to see agreements signed with all the other Arab states, and a fair solution found to the problem of the Palestinians. I am committed to the peace and security of my country. I shall try to explain here a few of the basic attitudes (psychological, ideological, and political) of my fellow countrymen. I hope one day to read a similar document by an Egyptian intellectual or a Palestinian writer, trying to explain to us, not the "minimal conditions for peace" (that is the task of the politicians), but the feelings and attitudes from which the conflict derives, and which will have to change if peace is to be achieved.

Three Basic Attitudes

ALMOST FROM the beginning of modern Zionism there has been a fierce debate over the question of our relations with our Arab neighbours, both inside the country and in the neighbouring states. It is impossible to describe here all the various nuances in this debate. I shall try to give a schematic sketch of three fundamental tendencies.

1. The militant approach may be termed, in the phrase of Vladimir Jabotinsky, the "iron wall" theory. The Jews, according to this approach, are returning to the land of their forefathers so as to inherit it. It is up to us to create facts and to build up our strength, until the Arabs are compelled to submit to the Zionist reality because of its superior power. There is no hope of compromise or understanding between the two sides until the Jews have erected the "iron wall" and the Arabs have understood that they are unable to break through

THIS is the first of a series of articles discussing the problems of the "Peace Process". AMOS OZ is a prominent Israeli novelist whose books have won a wide audience for him throughout the West. In England his novels have been published by Chatto & Windus and by Fontana in paperback editions: "My Michael" (1972), "Elsewhere Perhaps" (1973), "Touch the Water Touch the Wind" (1975), "The Hill of Evil Counsel" and his latest collection of short stories, "Where the Jackals Howl", which appeared in 1981.

it. Only then will the victors be in a position to treat the losers with magnanimity. This approach has been, for most of the period of the Zionist enterprise, that of a minority.

2. The romantic approach, which has also been a minority position in the history of Zionism, is represented by the *Brit Shalom* movement and others like it, and by groups which have inherited its main doctrines. *Brit Shalom* maintained that without the "consent" of the Arabs Zionism is either immoral or impossible, or both. Martin Buber and his disciples believed that Zionism conferred a blessing on the Arabs and that we ought to explain this blessing to them, persuade them to be enamoured of the Zionist enterprise, and only then proceed with the enterprise itself. This movement was prepared to entertain such ideas as a multinational state, a supranational state, a federal state, a confederal state, and so on.

The fate of the members of *Brit Shalom* and their successors was a tragic one. Internally they were accused of obsequiousness and even treachery, while the Palestinians saw them as crafty cynics who were out to cheat the Arabs by camouflaging their real intentions. The movement never succeeded in convincing either the Israelis or the Arabs.

3. The intermediate position, which—forsaking "historical objectivity"—I propose to call the "realistic approach", is that of the founding fathers of Zionist social democracy and the leaders of the Zionist bourgeoisie. Chaim Weizmann, David Ben Gurion, and Levi Eshkol—with varying emphases—shared this approach, which was dominant at least up to 1967.

What is the substance of the "realistic approach"? Zionism is a movement of national liberation, which has no need of any "consent" or "agreement" from the Arabs. But it must recognise that the conflict between us and the Palestinians is not a cheap Wild Western in which civilised "goodies" are fighting against native "baddies." It is more like a Greek tragedy. It represents a clash of two conflicting rights. The Palestinian Arabs have a strong and legitimate claim, and the Israelis must recognise this, without this recognition leading us into self-denial or feelings of guilt. We are bound to accept a painful compromise, and admit that the Land of Israel is the homeland of two nations, and we must agree to its partition in one form or another.

As I have said, the "realistic approach" used to be the main line of the Zionist enterprise. Between 1967 and President Anwar Sadat's visit in 1977 the

"militant approach" gained a good deal of ground. At the moment Israeli public opinion is divided. The party divisions in Israel have never precisely expressed the differences between these approaches, and even today the party-political map does not reflect accurately the relative weights of the various tendencies.

Right vs. Right

ZIONISM is a movement of national liberation. This point is not really understood even by our friends, while our foes tend to reject it angrily. It is this anger that I am trying to defuse. The Jews are not like other victims of enslavement and oppression. We did not wake up in our own land after a long period of oppression and slavery to throw out our oppressors and regain our independence. We do not fit into the usual model of "national liberation." For upwards of a thousand years this land was inhabited by Arabs. It was not they, but the Romans, who crushed our independence. It was not they who banished our forefathers into exile. One cannot say that we came here to recover from the Arabs what the Arabs took from us by force.

In any case, Zionism—according to the interpretation which I accept—is not a movement to liberate territory but a movement to liberate people. The word "liberation" can only be meaningfully applied to people. The purpose of Zionism was to achieve the national liberation of the Jews who had a desperate need of national self-determination and could no longer exist as a religious minority within other nations.

For various historical reasons—emotional, religious, and cultural—the only place where the Jews were willing and able to establish the framework of a nation was the Land of Israel. And this land was not empty. Why were these emotional, religious, and cultural ties still so strong even after thousands of years? Who would be rash enough to attempt to explain the various national migrations which have taken place in history? Any one-dimensional explanation, be it theological or Marxist-materialist, poetic or strategic or sociological, appears petty and ridiculous in relation to the enormity of the phenomenon itself: throngs of people migrate from various places to one particular place, to become a nation. And this place is not comfortable or rich; it does not offer promising political or economic conditions; and yet the migration does not diminish. Even the migra-

tions of birds or the movements of animals from an old home to a new one, or from the new back to the old, are phenomena which have given rise to specific scientific theories; but who would dare to claim that he had found one simple, satisfying explanation?

THE AGONIES OF the Jews in most of the countries where they were dispersed, especially in the last hundred years, shattered their hopes of divine salvation, as well as their hopes of being rescued by liberal, humanist, or socialist progress.

There were some Jews who, because of suffering and persecution, abandoned their Judaism.

There were some Jews who accepted suffering and persecution as part of the natural world order, as the will of God.

There were some Jews who had learnt to flee from refuge to refuge, to wander from country to country.

And there were many who decided that the only way out was to become a nation like all the others. They felt they had to return to their home, and acquire what any nation has: territory and sovereignty.

For these Jews "home" meant the Land of Israel. One may attempt to explain this in Marxist or in mystical terms; the fact is that those Jews who had made up their minds to return home came to Israel. Like a bird coming back to its old nest or a wounded animal returning to its lair.

But the founders of "realistic Zionism" knew that the Arabs would not accept this phenomenon, whether through force of arms (the "iron wall") or through fine promises (the "romantic approach"). They perceived the elements of tragedy which are woven into the conflict between two rights.

WHAT IS THE RIGHT on the Zionist side? It is the right of a drowning man who takes hold of the only available raft, even if it means pushing aside the legs of the people who are already sitting on it so as to make some room for himself . . . so long as he only asks them to move up, and does not demand that they get off the raft or drown in the sea. A Zionism which asks for a part of the land is morally justified; a Zionism which asks the Palestinians to renounce their identity and give up the whole land is not justified.

When right conflicts with right, one possible solution—as in a Greek tragedy—is the sword. The other possible solution is a sad, painful, and inconsistent compromise. Such a compromise is

only possible between an inconsistent Zionist and an inconsistent Palestinian, who are both prepared to abandon part of their right for the sake of something which is more precious than right: life. The heroes of tragedies, people who are caught up in a complex of conflicting rights, pursue and destroy each other until the stage is covered with corpses. People who demand absolute justice choose death. The price of life, whether in a family conflict or a national one, is compromise and partial renunciation.

I blame the Palestinian national movement for insensitivity to the suffering of the Jews, for callousness ("It's a European problem which doesn't concern the Arabs") and for lack of imagination; but I do not blame them for refusing to welcome the Jews with a deferential bow and hand over the keys of the land.

I blame the militant Zionists for disregarding the identity of the Palestinian population; but I cannot blame the Jews for seeing the Land of Israel as their last possible life-raft.

All these considerations lead me to accept the moral (and not merely pragmatic) rightness of the idea of partitioning the land between its two nations. The task of fixing the borders of the partitioned land I leave to the politicians.

What is Delaying a Comprehensive Solution?

ON BOTH SIDES there are elements which refuse to respect reality. On our side we have the militant approach, the "iron wall" theory. On the Palestinian side there exists an obsession with "absolute justice." I have repeatedly stated in the course of numerous debates that I refuse to regard the PLO as a "Palestinian liberation movement." Not because they shed innocent blood—who has not shed innocent blood in the pursuit of liberation from foreign domination?—but because the PLO is not content simply to liberate the Palestinians. It wants to liberate me as well. That is the long and the short of it. It is as if the FLN had decided not to be satisfied with the liberation of Algeria but wished to liberate France from the shackles of Catholicism. Or as if the Viet Cong had decided to liberate America from the yoke of Capitalism. Arafat claims to want to "liberate the Jews in Palestine from the Zionist yoke." This is an absurd position which has no precedent in any liberation movement. Arafat claims the right to determine my

identity for me. He wishes to liberate me from myself.

If the Palestinians were to come along tomorrow with a proposal to recognise us and our independence and our nationhood on condition that we recognised them and their independence, I should be prepared to embark at once on the painful and difficult negotiations towards a peace settlement. For 50 years now, the "realistic tendency" in Israel has been prepared to accept the partition of the land between its two nations, though with a heavy heart. But the PLO does not recognise the fact of the existence of two nations. It trumpets forth slogans about "handing back the stolen lands" and about "absolute justice" (understood in its own terms).

This attitude takes on a frightening dimension if we compare it to that of the militant Israelis who are not prepared to recognise the existence of a Palestinian people.

There is, however, no simple symmetry in this opposition. Good Israelis are prepared to envisage partition, sensible Arabs are prepared to envisage mutual recognition; but the extremists on both sides make no allowance for compromise.

There is no symmetry: the fundamental position of the PLO resembles the *militant* position in Israel. There is no parallel on the Palestinian side to the *realistic* position in Israel. That is why so far we have heard no real voice from the Palestinian side supporting partition as a fundamental and right solution (not as a stratagem or a stage on the road to the destruction of Israel).

So it is too with the "theatre critics" of the conflict, our European friends who judge us all from a safe distance. They say that the Arabs (Egypt excepted) have a "Saladdin complex" and the Israelis have a "Massada complex." The Palestinians suffer from an obsession with destruction and the Israelis from an obsession with insecurity. Conclusion: both sides are slightly deranged.

I REJECT this comparison. There is no symmetry between a destruction complex and an insecurity complex. There is no symmetry between the position of Begin (which I oppose) and that of Arafat, Assad, and Saddam Hussein. A destruction complex and an insecurity complex are not on the same level, either from the moral or the psychological point of view. Moreover, the Israeli insecurity complex is, to a large extent, a product of the "Saladdin complex" of part of the Arab world.

There is no alternative to reconciling oneself to

the fact that as a result of an historical cataclysm which has taken place over the past 70 years the land is divided between two populations with distinct national identities, neither of which is able—or entitled—to eliminate the other. President Sadat and his people realised this, created a conceptual revolution, and also brought about a conceptual revolution among us. With President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem many of the "militant Zionists" softened; and by means of this great emotional breakthrough Israel gained recognition and peace and Egypt recovered the Sinai Peninsula and gained peace. A similar emotional breakthrough needs to come about in the rest of the Arab countries, and first and foremost among the Palestinians, before we can celebrate the end of the whole conflict.

The Shadow of the Past

THE REAL CALAMITY is that both sides are unable to look each other in the eyes, to look into each other's souls. The leaders of Israel and Egypt have signed a peace agreement; the Israeli and Egyptian peoples have not yet arrived at a cordial mutual understanding. Here, perhaps, is the key to the depth of the tragedy.

What does the Israeli see when he looks at the Arab? Frequently he sees the shadow of his persecutors and oppressors in the grim past: Cossacks, dressed now in Arab robes and headcloths, come to continue the work of the pogrom-makers in previous generations, to murder, rape and pillage.

What does the Arab see when he looks at the Israelis? Frequently he sees in them the shadow of his former persecutors and oppressors. Not persecuted Jews trying to be a nation like all the rest, but a continuation of the wily, arrogant, European colonialist and imperialist, come to enslave the East and exploit its wealth by means of technological superiority.

The shadow of the past hangs over this whole conflict. It is Europe, which shed the blood of the Jews, persecuted and annihilated them, Europe which oppressed and humiliated and exploited the Arabs, that is responsible for the situation where Israelis and Arabs are unable to look into each other's eyes and souls without seeing the shadow of the past. The Arabs and the Israelis are both peoples who have experienced humiliation, subjugation, and suffering. But it is only in the

framework of Marxist mythology, or in the plays of Bertolt Brecht, that the persecuted and humiliated become "brothers" and forge links of mutual solidarity. In the lives of individuals and of nations the fiercest conflicts of all are often those between two victims of the same persecutor. The Arabs and the Israelis are two nations who have suffered anguish and humiliation at the hands of Europe. It is tragic that each looks at the other and sees only the face of their common enemy.

FEAR AND SUSPICION beget foolishness.

"If you agree to accept our formula", many Arabs say to Israel, "we shall spread the shelter of our protection over you, you will be free to worship in your own way, and the sword of Islam will guard you from all harm. . . ." Such words fuel the flames of the psychological trauma of the Israelis, because they recall what was said to us in the past, with terrible consequences.

Meanwhile the Israelis, for their part, often say something no less obtuse and dangerous to the Arabs: "If only you will accept our peace formula, we shall come to all the Arab countries with our sophisticated scientific and technological expertise, we shall improve your agriculture, set up industries, and bring you into the modern age."

It seems to me that remarks like these from the Israelis only fuel the flames of the Arab trauma. The Arab nations have heard this tune before, precisely from their most wily and brutal oppressors.

And so, before our eyes, both sides are adding fuel to the flames of the suspicion, fear and nightmares of the past. If only it were possible to banish this horror to the place where it belongs: the stage. Tragedy. Comedy. Farce.

It is the propagandists on both sides who are responsible for this idiocy. But blame also attaches

to the poets, the writers, and the intellectuals who do not attempt to break down the barriers of the stereotypes created by propaganda. In Egypt, in Israel, and among the Palestinians there ought to be thinkers who can understand the mind of the other side and will tell the politicians and the propagandists what must not be said and how to avoid reopening old wounds. The Israeli does not want to hear remarks about the protection of Islam or about freedom of religion within the Arab world. And the Arabs do not wish Israel to come and modernise them and change their way of life and their values.

Is it possible that writers and ideologists on both sides will perform this task? Will the poets undertake to do what is beyond the power of the politicians, to delve into the depths of the other's soul, to voice his fears and traumas, to concern themselves not with questions of borders and arrangements but with questions of suspicions and anxieties? What is the reason for each side characterising the other in terms of treachery, cunning, savagery, and arrogance? What are the roots of the sense of injustice and humiliation on both sides?

ABOVE ALL, we are all now in need of a measure of mutual sensitivity and creative imagination, so that agreement between politicians can open the door to reconciliation between peoples. Sensitivity and creative imagination will help us to find a way which does not endanger the existence of Israel and does not involve exploitation and humiliation for the Arabs.

Is such a way possible? I have no simple answer. But the real question is this: Is it possible that there is *no* such way—and in that case, where will it all end?

Luise Hausmann

Wittgenstein in Austria

as an Elementary-School Teacher

THIS ACCOUNT of Ludwig Wittgenstein's activities as an elementary-school teacher in Lower Austria from 1920 to 1926 is by a retired secondary-school teacher from Kirchberg am Wechsel, in the immediate vicinity of two of the villages where Wittgenstein taught. Luise Hausmann gathered information from her neighbours in Otterthal and Trattenbach over a ten-year period, and made several journeys to the third village, Puchberg am Schneeberg.

A shortened version of this essay, "*Wittgenstein als Volksschullehrer*", appeared in *Club Voltaire* (IV, pp. 391–96) in 1970, as a footnote to an article by Professor W. W. Bartley, and was the major source for much of his controversial biography and for the numerous papers which he wrote on the relation of Wittgenstein to the Austrian School Reform Movement. Its publication in English translation should therefore be of particular use in assessing the value and validity of certain conclusions about Wittgenstein's personality and his life in Lower Austria. The text contains information about his teaching methods (which conflicts with Professor Bartley's school-reform thesis) and remarks about his "Evangelism" and "misogyny" (which Professor Bartley appears to have either mistranslated or taken out of context), and is notably lacking in reference to socialist or homosexual tendencies—claims which Professor Bartley makes repeatedly but which appear to be completely without substance as far as Trattenbach and Lower Austria are concerned.

The essay is written without philosophical pretensions by a native Austrian closely acquainted with the people of the area and, as a result of her own teaching experiences there, able to put into clearer perspective the non-philosophical aspects of Wittgenstein's life at that time.

My translation is based on the original manuscript—except for information about Wittgenstein's experiences in Otterthal which was prepared some years after the main manuscript and is now lost. In this instance I have used the shortened *Club Voltaire* text. I have refrained from enlarging on Mrs Hausmann's comments except where I felt this might lead to misunderstanding or to focus attention on certain differences between the essay and Professor Bartley's biography.

Luise Hausmann is also the author of a secondary-school grammar book (Aspang: Franz Maschna, 1958) with the intriguingly Wittgensteinian title, *Your English Grammar: Eine übersichtliche Darstellung der grammatikalischen Regeln*.

Eugene C. Hargrove

SOON AFTER LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN's death a letter arrived at our school in Kirchberg am Wechsel (Lower Austria) from the district school administration which requested information about him. It said that he had died in Cambridge on 29 April 1951, and that the headmaster was requested to ask the teachers who had known him what they remembered of him.¹

It was then that I heard his name for the first time. The label "philosopher" made me curious. I looked about eagerly in the circle of our sixteen teachers. There were only two who knew something

about him. The others were too young. The judgment of one gentleman came quickly and was somewhat scornful: "A totally insane fellow who wanted to introduce advanced mathematics to our elementary-school children." A woman said: "I only saw him at our teachers' meetings, where he remained completely silent. We felt that he was very much superior to us all."

That was very little and I wanted very much to learn more about him. What I subsequently heard by chance in the course of the following years was always the same. Wittgenstein had been very strict, demanded too much of the children, and had not spared the rod.

There are many things in our lives which do not let us rest. Probably we should deal with them with-

¹ All the inquiries were instituted in 1953 by Professor Friedrich A. Hayek, who is related to Wittgenstein. See his article in *ENCOUNTER* (August 1977), "Remembering my Cousin, Ludwig Wittgenstein."

out asking for an aim and purpose. One day I asked our teacher from Trattenbach to make a few inquiries about Wittgenstein. I learned from him that there were still a few people in Trattenbach who remembered him very well, but that during the inquiry the schools in Otterthal and Trattenbach in which Wittgenstein had worked as a teacher had reported everything which was to be learned. For example, Wittgenstein had once repaired a machine in the factory.

An accidental meeting with the parents of a former schoolgirl from Trattenbach caused me to return again to the old thoughts. Perhaps these school reports were too objective? It was possible that there was still someone who had personally known Wittgenstein well. I wanted now to look for these people myself in order to speak to them. The father of a former schoolgirl sent me at once to the right man: Oskar Fuchs, the shoemaker in Trattenbach, near Kirchberg am Wechsel.

THERE HE SAT BEFORE ME completely immersed in his memories of his former teacher whom he had admired. He, an unknown and insignificant philosopher, discussed the great and famous one. I had to laugh as he began his story with an apology: "Wittgenstein was an ascetic. Such men are taken to be crazy, but one simply cannot measure them with the usual yardsticks." This introduction made me very happy for it convinced me at once that in this man the seed had fallen on fertile ground. I heard so much that I was completely taken by sur-

prise. What I write is exactly what Mr Fuchs can still remember. They are individual details which stick in our memories and often do not form a coherent story.

WITTGENSTEIN was Fuchs' teacher in Trattenbach for the last two years of his elementary-school education, 1920 to 1922. Afterwards Wittgenstein went to Puchberg and Otterthal. His slender, medium-sized figure was well known for he went for walks, always with a stick, in a wind-breaker with an open collar, always looking upward. Once when he unexpectedly had the opportunity to drive to Kirchberg with a farmer to see the dentist, Wittgenstein fastened a towel around his head like a turban. In bad weather he wore a leather seaman's-cap which touched his shoulders. He did not eat at the inn; children brought him food from the house of a farmer. For these services he always rewarded them with small presents. They also brought him his litre of milk every day.

Once when Fuchs called on him—Wittgenstein also loved to give his pupils private lessons—he was astonished by the cooking arrangements which he saw in Wittgenstein's room: under two clamps (iron clamps intended for holding logs together) there was a shoe-polish tin filled with alcohol, and on it milk was being warmed.

Wittgenstein's enthusiasm for passing on his knowledge to his pupils knew no limits. And this knowledge was extensive. Fuchs, who was among the best of his pupils, especially remembers architectural styles, algebra, and natural history.² Wittgenstein once came into the classroom with a dead squirrel and skilfully dissected it. (One little girl felt sick, and was permitted to leave the room.) Wittgenstein had brought a microscope from Vienna which was used to study stamens and blood. On clear, starry evenings he went out with those thirsty for knowledge in order to show them the constellations. Once they went up to a mountain chapel to determine the degree of latitude with the help of the sun and a walking stick.

There was no time for breaks; the lessons continued without stop although the children were permitted to eat while listening. Fuchs remembers very well what trouble Wittgenstein took to guide the children in finding out for themselves what was possible, and his pupils are only now beginning to realise how much they learned from him. Certainly the less gifted fell a little short in this respect; at that time the good and bad pupils all sat together in this elementary school. The teachers couldn't work wonders even at that time.

It is believed that the school inspector was not at all in agreement with the teaching methods of Wittgenstein.³ He was shocked by Stingl-Sponner's

² Natural history includes biology, botany, and geology.

³ See William Warren Bartley III, *Wittgenstein* (Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1973), hereafter referred to as AV (American Version); William W. Bartley III, *Wittgenstein* (London: Quartet Books, 1974), hereafter referred to as BV (British Version). W. W. Bartley III, "Sprach- und Wissenschaftstheorie als Werkzeuge einer Schulreform: Wittgenstein und Popper als österreichische Schullehrer", *Conceptus*, III (1969); W. W. Bartley III, "Die österreichische Schulreform als die Wiege der modernen Philosophie", *Club Voltaire*, IV (1970); William Warren Bartley III, "Theory of Language and Philosophy of Science as Instruments of Educational Reform: Wittgenstein and Popper as Austrian Schoolteachers", *Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, XIV (1974).

The following remarks are in conflict with Professor Bartley's claims (AV, pp. 100–101; BV, pp. 68–69) that Wittgenstein and Wilhelm Kundt, the school inspector, were in significant agreement with regard to teaching methods, one of Bartley's grounds for maintaining that Wittgenstein was a follower of Glöckel's school-reform movement. Director Rudolf Koder has informed me that Wittgenstein was highly regarded by Kundt as a teacher. Director Koder, nevertheless, says that Wittgenstein was not strictly speaking a school-reform teacher since his methods were often in conflict with reform principles. This point of view is compatible with Kundt's own remarks written for the 1953 inquiry (in the files of the

natural history books and said that an ordinary spelling book would probably be more important. To which Wittgenstein replied: "But *Herr Inspektor*, the children must have the spelling in their heads!" However, Wittgenstein did publish a small booklet on spelling.⁴ Naturally there were also severe arguments on account of the algebra, but Wittgenstein was not dissuaded from preparing a few of his pupils for further study. He also spent much time giving private lessons—free, of course. He was just as generous in spending his money; he bought books for the poor children and even provided them with shoes. Although it was done in a very discreet way, the people still knew very well indeed who the "foolish fellow" was. It was good that there was a second such person who stood faithfully at his side; but more about that later.

ONE DAY WITTGENSTEIN took his best boys and girls with him to Vienna. There they immediately visited all the large museums: the technical, natural history and art history museums, and Schönbrunn. At the tram stop, the signal to depart was given too early. Wittgenstein roared at the conductor: "Are you crazy? Don't you see that not all of the children have got on?" They stayed overnight in an army hospital where Wittgenstein's sister was employed as a nurse. The children were very surprised when they were expected in the evening to wash not only their hands and faces but also their necks and the upper parts of their bodies.

Landesschulrat für Niederösterreich). Although Kundt begins and ends his statement with reference to Wittgenstein's excellent teaching abilities, he says in the body of the letter: "The methods of instruction at elementary-school level certainly did not always do justice to his extensive knowledge, and his teaching objectives overshot the mark prescribed for elementary-school level." The remarks in Mrs Hausmann's essay may, of course, represent local gossip and nothing more; however, in view of the details given and the fact that Kundt was certainly aware of Wittgenstein's independent teaching methods, it seems more likely that they refer to some argument between Wittgenstein and Kundt before Kundt became fully acquainted with and satisfied with Wittgenstein's results.

⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Wörterbuch für Volksschulen* (Vienna, Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky A.G., 1926). Although called a dictionary and in some ways having the format of a dictionary, the book was primarily an alphabetical list of words intended to help children improve their spelling when writing compositions. Wittgenstein made this point himself in the unpublished foreword which later appeared in an art and literature yearbook: Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Geleitwort zu Wörterbuch für Volksschulen", *Ver Sacrum: Neue Hefte für Kunst und Literatur, Jahrgang VII* (Vienna and Munich, Jugend und Volk Verlagsgesellschaft GmbH, 1971), pp. 38–39. Since definitions were normally not given (except in the case of certain foreign words), the book was not suitable for discovering the meanings of unfamiliar words which is one purpose of standard dictionaries.

It is scarcely imaginable today what this excursion 40 years ago obviously demanded in the way of physical effort on the part of the children. They had to march home from Gloggnitz to Trattenbach, about 20 kilometres, on foot during the night, almost entirely through woods. Wittgenstein asked: "Are you afraid? Then you must think about God very hard."

At Christmas Fuchs was supposed to travel to Vienna with Wittgenstein primarily for the purpose of seeing a performance at the Burg Theatre. But it didn't work out. His mother said at once: "With that crazy fellow?" The objection of the father that the boy did not have appropriate clothes (they were really thinking of evening clothes like those customarily worn by gentlemen) got the immediate retort from Wittgenstein: "Oh, he can get something from me." The true reason which Wittgenstein was not told was simply that the boy could not be separated from his family at Christmas time; and Wittgenstein was very much hurt by this refusal.

Wittgenstein's sister once sent a box of oranges, a fruit which at that time was still a rarity, especially in such a tiny place. Every child got one, the best pupils two.

THAT THE "CRAZY FELLOW" was not only a visionary but could also put his ideas to work is one of the favourite memories which the inhabitants of Trattenbach still have of him today. At the textile mill of the Österreichische Textil AG a steam-engine stopped working. The engineers were mystified. The machine was supposed to be dismantled and taken to Vienna. Wittgenstein heard about it and asked if he could take a look at the machine. The director, a Czech, said good naturedly, "Let's let him enjoy himself. If the engineers can't fix it, then he can do even less." But to the great astonishment of everyone Wittgenstein traced the trouble, repaired the machine and got it going again. As thanks the director wanted to give him some material from which he could have shirts made. Wittgenstein declined and asked for a sandbox for the school. He got it.

WITTGENSTEIN'S WORK as a teacher in this little village was unfortunately completely misunderstood. He moved in higher spheres and he did not succeed in climbing down. In such people, mental development is accomplished so quickly that they completely forget the preceding steps on which so many people remain standing. He was too strict as a teacher, concerned himself too little with the less gifted children and did not spare the rod if it was necessary. Thus, a thoroughgoing conspiracy

formed against him. He said concerning it: "If you stand up against me, it doesn't matter to me just as long as you are in agreement with each other. I will be ready for you!"

He was able to develop a relationship with the children to a certain degree, but the local residents were opposed to him without understanding; and it hurt him that they rejected him. The gap was too wide.

He had only one true friend, with whom he spent many hours, and who, also in the end had to leave. He was Father Neururer (perhaps originating from the small village of Neurur in the Pitz Valley in Tyrol) who was not inferior to him in originality. Like Wittgenstein, he did not pay much attention to his appearance and was shabbily dressed, but diligently supported those who were in need. Like Wittgenstein he was strict and uncompromising, and like him was persecuted. The friendship alone between a Catholic priest and a Protestant teacher (his Jewish origin through his grandfather would hardly have been known) was puzzling to the people.⁵ The kind of man Neururer was is best shown in the following incident. A miner was dying, and the priest went to him. But the man sent him home, for he placed no value on religious consolation. And of this "godless" person, Neururer said, "He was a decent man."

Neururer spoke bluntly from the pulpit about everything which did not please him. The people went to church less and less; but that didn't hurt his feelings for he said, "You don't go to church for my sake but because of God." Neururer had to leave Trattenbach, but that was long after Wittgenstein had already left. It is said that he turned round one last time and took a final melancholy look at the place before he left forever. In this gesture of parting there may have also been some sign of gratitude for it is often in our bitterest hours that we learn the most.

When Wittgenstein heard that Fuchs wanted to be a shoemaker like his father, he was very pleased. "A man must do something proper with which he can be satisfied", he said. On the other hand, he was shocked when he heard from another pupil that he would become a salesman. He greatly prized "golden" handcraft.

NOT UNTIL FUCHS allowed me to read the only letter which he was able to save from the flood

⁵ Although the people of Trattenbach seem to have believed that Wittgenstein was a Protestant, he gave his religion as Roman Catholic on all documents until he arrived there; and it is listed as Roman Catholic on his records at the teachers' college the year before.

⁶ Now in the possession of Mrs Fuchs.

⁷ The teachers of religious instruction and girls' handicrafts. Otherwise Wittgenstein was the sole teacher of his class for the school year.

catastrophe of 1954 did I fully comprehend the relation between the teacher and the pupil.⁶ What pupil preserves the letters of his teacher his whole life long? Fuchs was indeed not able to foresee what a famous philosopher Wittgenstein would become; and what teacher writes his former pupils such detailed letters? Perhaps only a teacher can judge the true meaning of these lines which speak of nothing but his concern about the spiritual well-being of this child. This letter affected me deeply, for it revealed powerfully what a distinguished human being *and* teacher Wittgenstein had been. He took so much care to write legibly and speak simply and clearly to his pupil. Many people were mistaken about him: he had a warm relationship with many of his pupils, and he remained to them the ideal of selflessness throughout their whole lives.

Wittgenstein's superior, the headmaster, did not quite know what to make of him. Wittgenstein had once said concerning the payment of his salary, "What am I supposed to do with all this money again?"—"And it is always too little for me", said the headmaster. "Oh, then you can have it", replied Wittgenstein, and offered it all to him.

GEORG BERGER reports the following: "At the time when the elementary-school teacher Ludwig Wittgenstein came to the school in Trattenbach, I was the provisional headmaster. He asked me to help him if necessary. I willingly promised to do so, but it was not necessary. He was very diligent at the school. For every class he painstakingly wrote a lesson plan in a book large and thick enough to be a school register. The school hours were always too short for him. The teachers who were supposed to take his class next often had to wait outside the door.⁷ He made many teaching aids himself and with the help of the children: a model steam-engine, a model iron works, mammal skeletons, etc. He had all sorts of bottles and flasks with various contents for use in chemistry lessons. Once when he was putting them in order a middle-sized flask with pitch-black contents caught his attention. It succeeded in doing so by attacking his sense of smell. 'Concentrated toilet smell—ox blood from last year', was his explanation.

"Wittgenstein taught the upper grades. With the older, more gifted pupils he even worked algebra problems. He said that sometimes the opposite way—from the difficult to the simple—also achieved results and that everyone who once understood the universal would then find the particular easy.

"In Trattenbach he wrote his *Dictionary for Elementary Schools*. He collected all the words which his pupils used in their compositions—their

vocabulary—which they could quickly look up in his list. He did not know *Kurrent* handwriting which was still used at that time.⁸ He said that throughout his whole life he had only written in 'Latin' handwriting. In music classes he used neither violin nor harmonium, but rather a B-flat clarinet, and with great success.

"If he met pupils from his classes at night, he immediately gave them lessons in astronomy. Occasionally he organised these lessons in advance.

"He had his cherry-wood walking stick⁹ constantly with him while on the go and also during lessons. He wore high boots every day; his clothing was always the same; he wore a hat only in bad weather (it was a sou'wester). He did not like to be disturbed during his nightly walks.

"The local priest, Alois Neururer, was very devoted to Herr Wittgenstein. In spite of this the following incident took place during a religious examination. I was the organist in the choir. With me was the priest from Raach, and Wittgenstein eventually also came in. The children stood before the altar which the Dean sat behind and the priest examined them. Wittgenstein listened attentively and suddenly said loud enough to be heard, 'Pure nonsense! (*Blödsinn!*)'. He was, to the great astonishment of the religious personages present, not satisfied with the way the questions were being asked in the examination.

"As class reading material he introduced J. P. Hebel's *Treasury* from which he first removed passages unsuitable for the pupils.

"If we were both sitting in the office, he unobtrusively guided the conversation and my thoughts in a particular direction and demanded absolutely logical remarks and answers. He would laugh heartily if such experiments made me tired. Sometimes he whistled a short melody, and I had to whistle it after him. If it sounded all right, then he tirelessly whistled the accompaniment. The new headmaster, who had arrived in the meantime, played the piano very well; I myself much preferred the violin. Wittgenstein suggested that we form a trio and practise something by Mozart for our own enjoyment. Parts: piano, B-flat clarinet and viola

(the part of the viola was to be roughly adapted to the violin). The first practice soon took place in the Hoffman Inn. We started over from the beginning again and again; Wittgenstein never got tired. Finally a break! Headmaster Rupert Kollner and I were then unintentionally inconsiderate and played some dance melody by heart. Then Wittgenstein said angrily, '*Krautsalat! Krautsalat!*' and left.

"He preferred a primitive diet. He got food daily from Farmer Traht who lived back in the Schlaggraben, and he always took some of it home in a milk can. He once looked at the family altar in the farmer's home. He, the connoisseur, smiled at the crude pictures there which were completely worthless artistically. The family which was secretly watching him shook their heads critically.

"At first Wittgenstein lived in a small room in an inn called *Zum Brauen Hirschen*. Soon after he moved in, some dance music was played. That was too much for him; he left, came to me and asked for quarters. Later he established himself in the school kitchen (the headmaster had not yet arrived). He cut wood on the stove and on the floor (both the stove and the floor looked it too). For hours he would sit at the kitchen window and look at the starry sky.

"Three friends visited him constantly: Dr Hänsel, an old photographer, and a young, very tall Swede. I once met Wittgenstein and Dr Hänsel in the school office. Wittgenstein wanted to know what was being said about him in the village. I hesitated because I knew there would be trouble again. But he insisted. So then I said that he was considered to be a rich baron. He admitted to having been rich but emphasised that he had given everything to his brothers and sisters (thus, he added, not really doing a good deed).

"Young married people need money and this condition applied to me at the time that Wittgenstein was here. He often indicated his readiness to provide temporary help. So I borrowed a thousand from him. But I had a great deal of trouble paying back the money because he absolutely did not want to accept it. His violin (an ordinary school violin) which I wanted to buy from him since he had no use for it, he relinquished only on the condition that I would not speak about paying for it. As compensation, he asked for an old music-book of my father's which only contained hand-written country waltzes for the clarinet, and perhaps also some Styrian ones.

"He wanted to let a few of the more gifted pupils continue their education. Unfortunately, the idea of doing so was completely beyond their comprehension.

"ONCE A STEAM-ENGINE, a standing one in the local weaving mill, got stuck. A belt broke, a transmission fell and the piston was firmly stuck.

⁸ "*Kurrent*" handwriting was a special German style of handwriting which children were taught in school in the 19th century; it could not be read by those who had not specifically learned it. At the time Wittgenstein taught, it was still being used but was being replaced by "Latin" handwriting, the form normally used by German and non-German peoples today. Since "*Kurrent*" is completely out of use and no longer taught in schools, most younger German-speaking people are unable to read it. Those who can still do so learned it in the main between 1938 and 1941, when it was briefly given renewed emphasis in elementary and secondary schools.

⁹ For some unknown reason Professor Bartley changed "cherry-wood" to "bamboo" (AV, p. 107; BV, p. 73).

The engineers were of the opinion that the piston rod would have to be bored out. Great distress prevailed in the factory. Wittgenstein, whom I told about it, at once showed the greatest interest in the incident and asked me to obtain permission from the director of the factory to look at the machine. I succeeded, although the director was not exactly pleased about it. Wittgenstein set out immediately; I, naturally, also went along. He looked at the steam-engine from all sides, asked the operators questions, requested the assistance of four employees, who worked on the machine in accordance with his instructions, and had the trouble fixed in no time at all.¹⁰ The director and the workers looked at one another in amazement. The former thanked him most heartily for his unexpected and speedy resolution of the factory's problem, and offered him a package of linen. Wittgenstein at first declined to accept it. After repeated pressure, however, he finally gave in, but declared that he would divide the goods among his pupils. He repaired old sewing-machines for a few housewives, and is supposed to have put an obstinate winch back into working order for a farmer.

"I am surprised that after such a long time so much about Wittgenstein has occurred to me. However, I have enjoyed arousing the memories.

Trattenbach, 20 March 1953"

FRAU BERGER, the widow of Georg Berger, a former headmaster in Trattenbach, whom Wittgenstein met earlier as a colleague, found this report which her husband had sent to the district school administration.

Frau Berger has the fondest memories of Wittgenstein even though she only knew him slightly. He was touchingly concerned about the young married couple and was always ready to help. "You must go to Vienna—you must permit your wife to be examined—go to my family doctor", he urged

again and again after the wife had had an operation. Finally they gave in and went to Vienna. When the first little daughter arrived, Wittgenstein appeared on the second day: "I want to visit the little miss." He looked into the baby carriage for a long time and declared, "The very image of her grandmother." Whenever he came into the house, he brought something with him: usually chocolate, once three pretty little pictures.

EMMERICH KODERHOLD, a farmer in Trattenbach, Hinterotter, was among those pupils whom Wittgenstein had strongly advised to continue their studies. The father objected, "I need someone to take over my farm."

"Of course", Wittgenstein answered, "but more education will help him handle manure better."¹¹

In the end Wittgenstein actually succeeded in sending the boy to Vienna along with a school-friend to attend a *Gymnasium*. They stayed with an old woman, but their time as students lasted only a few days. The food was poor. "Naturally you don't find farmer's victuals here", declared Wittgenstein. But the boys did not stick it out, and went home.

Koderhold has a very good memory of Wittgenstein's clarinet, with regard to which Wittgenstein said, "My clarinet never plays a false note." He was also especially impressed by the student songs and canons (for example, "Brother Martin") which the children learned from him.

Concerning Wittgenstein's teaching methods, Koderhold maintains that they were often unforgettably effective. In a history lesson, when Koderhold gave "Innsbruck" as the place where Andreas Hofer died, "Mantua" was indelibly imprinted on his memory by hand.

Wittgenstein and the children built a wonderful model of a steam-engine completely out of wood. Such work took a lot of time and the children were often kept in school long after their lessons were officially over. This led to some opposition from parents who did not place much value in knowledge.

WITTGENSTEIN met Farmer Traht's wife through Father Neururer. She cooked for him and never ceased to be amazed at his satisfaction with everything. "You certainly aren't going to like this", she often said, but Wittgenstein parried each time with "No, no, it is very nicely cooked indeed." These people, who had agreed to cook for the teacher during that bad time, were very God-fearing. They said Grace before meals and for this reason Wittgenstein probably felt obliged to remark, as Frau Traht's son tells it, that he wasn't a "Christian", only a "Protestant."¹²

¹⁰ The idiom "*Hand an eine Sache legen*" which means "turn one's hand to something" or "take something in hand", which I have translated here as "worked on the machine", may be the basis for Professor Bartley's account that the workers under Wittgenstein's direction performed a miracle by tapping on the machine in rhythm (AV, p. 104; BV, p. 71).

¹¹ "Handle manure" refers to "*Mistführen*", which involves cleaning manure out of barns, transporting it in a little wagon, making a manure heap, and finally, at the right time of year, spreading it on the fields as fertiliser. It is one of the simplest and most basic traditional activities engaged in by Lower Austrian farmers.

¹² In Professor Bartley's biography we find the following: "Once when questioned by a villager about his

In 1933 Wittgenstein, along with Father Neururer, again visited the little farmhouse. Frau Traht was very ill at that time and no longer able to get out of bed. How surprised all the people in the house were when Wittgenstein insisted on holding her little grandchild, then not yet a year old. He had never shown any special interest in such little babies, and as far as the ladies were concerned was looked upon as a woman-hater.¹³ But he felt sincere compassion for the old grandmother and was dismayed when relatives smiled about her muddled conversations. "She can't do anything about it", he said, stubbornly defending her.

religion, Wittgenstein replied that although he was not a Christian, he was an 'Evangelist'. The villager was bewildered, for Wittgenstein emphasised that he did not mean that he was a Protestant (or 'Evangelical'). What Wittgenstein was trying to say cannot be determined with certainty, but it appears he intended to suggest that although his business had something to do with saving souls and the proclamation of a gospel, these need not take place in a formal Christian framework" (AV, p. 104; BV, p. 71). Later Bartley draws the conclusion referring to Wittgenstein as "the non-Christian 'Evangelist'" (AV, p. 117; BV, pp. 80–81). This remark in Mrs Hausmann's essay may also be the basis for Bartley's earlier claim that Wittgenstein may have been "attempting something like an imitation of Christ" (AV, p. 84; BV, p. 54), since in German "a Christian" is "*ein Christ*." Professor Bartley is very wide of the mark here. Wittgenstein is merely poking fun at the Trattenbacher attitude that only Catholics are really Christians. "... as Frau Traht's son tells it" is intended to call attention to the word "*Evangeliker*" which is Trattenbach dialect for "*Evangelisch*" or "Protestant." The word has nothing to do with American-style "Evangelism."

¹³ Apparently the basis for Professor Bartley's claim that Wittgenstein "was considered by the women of the village to be misogynistic" (AV, p. 128; BV, p. 91). According to Maria Angerler Traht, the granddaughter of Wittgenstein's friend, Wittgenstein was thought of as being a woman-hater by the ladies of Trattenbach because he did not marry while teaching there. All bachelors were considered misogynists if they did not marry within a reasonably short time. Bartley's claim is certainly out of context as far as any *serious* charge of misogyny is concerned, and offers no support for his otherwise unsubstantiated claim that the people of Trattenbach considered Wittgenstein to be a homosexual (AV, p. 128; BV, p. 91). Numerous statements by people who knew Wittgenstein in Trattenbach, in the possession of Dr Adolf Hübner, head of the Wittgenstein Verein of Kirchberg and Trattenbach, suggest that such an idea never entered anyone's mind.

¹⁴ Some shoemakers travelled from house to house and from farm to farm at this time repairing and making shoes.

¹⁵ Such remarks as these, along with those cited earlier, represent significant difficulties for Professor Bartley's school-reform thesis.

¹⁶ *Realschule* is one kind of secondary school. *Realschule* and *Gymnasium* are secondary schools intended to provide special preparation for advanced technical and university studies. If children did not attend one of these, they were required to attend the normal secondary school, known as *Hauptschule* or "main" school. Unless *Realschule* or *Gymnasium* is specifically mentioned, all references in this text to secondary school refer to *Hauptschule*.

A FEW MORE WORDS ABOUT Father Neururer. In 1930 during the time of unemployment in Austria Neururer boarded ten to fifteen schoolchildren in his parsonage. Occasionally he sent this or that boy to the farmers when the shoemakers were around in order to have him measured for a pair of shoes.¹⁴ In church he had the side altars taken away and the main altar turned around so that he could face the people while reading Mass: "What the Pope does, I can also do." He got together a whole choir with which he rehearsed Latin hymns. The residents were not very enthusiastic about it. He left Trattenbach in 1936.

NORBERT ROSNER, a secondary-school teacher in Puchberg am Schneeberg, has written the following about Wittgenstein:

My Memories of Herr Wittgenstein

"When I came to Puchberg am Schneeberg in September 1923, I became acquainted with Herr Wittgenstein, who at that time worked in the elementary school there.

"Herr Wittgenstein had just moved, giving up his roomy and comfortably furnished room on the first floor of Frau Ehrbar's house and getting instead a narrow, dark and damp room, an empty washroom in the house of Herr Rendl. There was no room for more than a bed, a chair, and a small table in the tiny abode. Still, Wittgenstein felt comfortable. Frau Rendl gave him loving care and he could live in peace with his studies, his ideas and his world of thought.

"Herr Wittgenstein was in no way a hermit. Still he only visited those people who meant something to him. His best friend was Herr Koder, a teacher who worked in the same school. In addition, he often received visits from English-speaking students with whom he carried on philosophical discussions.

"As a teacher he worked with a passion which left nothing more to be desired. But he did not follow the national curriculum or the particular requirements of the local school authorities. Rather, he went on his own way, wanting to find new methods of teaching and education.¹⁵

"He believed that it was possible to present difficult algebra problems in the elementary school. Herr Wittgenstein had success—the children of the fifth-grade elementary-school class worked problems which normally were taken up in third or fourth year *Realschule* classes.¹⁶ During a lesson to which Wittgenstein invited me as a guest I was able to marvel at the little calculation artists.

"But even in other areas of instruction he introduced innovations. He built a potter's wheel with the schoolchildren and made pots out of clay. He dissected dead animals, separated out the bones and put them back together again as a skeleton. A

few of the preparations made in this manner are still preserved and are used as teaching aids in the secondary school in Puchberg, as for example a skeleton of a cat.

"Wittgenstein was considered odd. It is said that he came from a rich family, but had given up all claim to his wealth. He had an extremely simple way of life. Now and then he was so deep in thought that he forgot about his surroundings and made a curious impression on people.

"At first Herr Wittgenstein made no special impression on me personally. Only after I had become more closely acquainted with him and detected his keen intellect, his logical way of thinking, and his strong will did I learn to appreciate him. I was therefore sorry when Herr Wittgenstein was transferred in the following year (1924) to another school."

THAT IS THE REPORT Rosner sent to the Neunkirchen school-district administration in answer to its inquiry in 1953. I received supplementary information directly from Mr Rosner and Mr Rendl. I saw the tiny room in which Wittgenstein worked—it was scarcely larger than six square metres, but that made no difference. He played classical music there hour after hour; he was a passionate clarinet-player. And there he dissected the animals for his skeletons. Mr Rosner often admired his skill. With the greatest care the little bones were separated out, numbered, reconnected with wire, and mounted on a small board. Rosner remembers the heads of a crow, a rabbit, a dog, and the complete skeleton of a cat previously mentioned.

In the eyes of the local people he was a very comical aristocrat: too simply dressed (with a preference for boots), and on a vegetarian diet. But he knew how to use a workman's lathe, though no one had believed him capable of it.

Rosner once watched a chemistry experiment. Wittgenstein poured sodium into hydrochloric acid and got a little on himself, above one of his eyes. He was very foolhardy. And he also proved it on the ice, for Wittgenstein and Rosner loved to skate on a pond. Rosner pointed out the thin spots but Wittgenstein carelessly disregarded them—and fell in. Rosner tried to help him, and also fell in. They both ended up standing in neck-deep water, to the horror of a few hand-wringing spectators. But they were out quicker than expected and ran home to crawl into bed. The next day they appeared in the school fresh and lively; they hadn't even caught a cold.

Rosner was able in particular to enlarge his knowledge of chemistry through Wittgenstein. He was not, however, capable of carrying out the suggestions he received concerning natural history lessons: for example, to follow the development of

the eye or some other organ from the lower animals to man. He generally had to overcome again and again, and by degrees, a certain feeling of serfdom in relation to Wittgenstein.

Rosner describes Wittgenstein as appearing very sure of himself but often lost in his thoughts, totally engulfed by them. Wittgenstein was well thought of in Puchberg, in contrast to Trattenbach, and valued as a teacher—a fact which especially pleased me because, going by the remarks of some people there, one would almost feel obliged to defend him as a teacher.

Rosner had heard about the *Tractatus* [1921], and he mentioned to Wittgenstein that he would be interested in it. The answer was: "I am sorry, *Kollege*, but you really wouldn't understand anything about it." Young Fuchs also knew about it. Neururer's housekeeper, a nun, had once said to him, "Your teacher is a famous man. He has written an important book."

THE FRIENDSHIP between Wittgenstein and Koder, whom Wittgenstein became acquainted with when Koder was a young teacher, was built on a common enthusiasm for music. Koder played the piano and Wittgenstein played the clarinet or whistled. His whistling sounded as if it came out of an instrument. In Puchberg the two teachers discovered a worker in the coal mine who was able to sing songs with them in two-part harmony; songs by Schubert were preferred.

Wittgenstein often visited Koder later in Vienna. They played music together but never spoke a word about philosophy—Koder was just not interested, and Wittgenstein did not require it of him.

Koder had often heard Neururer's name. He knew that the old friends continued to exchange letters (in Latin), and that Wittgenstein especially admired the honest character of the priest.

AFTER PUCHBERG Wittgenstein was supposed to go to Neunkirchen, but all the hustle and bustle of such a large school did not suit him. So he transferred to Otterthal where he stayed from 1924 to 1926. He ate in the Rottensteiner Inn, but completely separate from the guests. One morning the milk was burnt, but he drank it silently. Only on the next day did he say something to Frau Rottensteiner: "Please don't burn the milk today! I can burn milk myself."

Many of his pupils here were killed in the War; others scattered to the winds. The few who remained behind agree in their statements: Wittgenstein was very strict, but kind-hearted, and it was incredible how much the children learned from him.

ENGELBERT STÖGERER was one of the five best mathematicians who had private lessons in mathematics and English every afternoon as preparation for the *Gymnasium* in case they wanted to continue their studies. Wittgenstein devoted himself to the less gifted pupils in the mornings. Stögerer has a small speech impediment and a somewhat hoarse voice. Wittgenstein examined the structure of his mouth and throat, established that there was something on the vocal cords, and advised Stögerer to eat raw eggs. He did this until he got his first bad egg; then he gave up the treatment forever.

Stögerer said that he does not remember ever hearing Wittgenstein sing. He conducted the singing lessons with his clarinet alone, and if a song went well he was so happy that he distributed candy.

Another farmer from Otterthal remembers best having to calculate the volume of kegs. Wittgenstein had little enduring influence on the girls. They were rather afraid of him and even today some of them are still haunted by the algebraic equations which they were supposed to solve!

Wittgenstein also took his Otterthal class to Vienna for three days at his own expense. They also seem to have spent the two nights with a sister in two rooms into which the boys and girls were

separated. Especially impressive on this trip, in addition to the visit to Schönbrunn, were a steamboat ride to Klosterneuburg and a visit to a school gym where the children were permitted to romp around on the equipment to their hearts' content.

As already mentioned, Wittgenstein ate at the Rottensteiners in Otterthal. Later I learned from a former maid of the headmaster that he had had a room in the school. No beggar left his door without receiving something.

In the washroom of the school the maid helped him boil the skin and flesh off the bones of a fox—once again putting together one of his wonderful skeletons, but the stench of this brew was dreadful. This girl also took part in a field trip to Vienna which lasted several days. "Yes, you, the tall one at the end. I can use you", he called as he saw her standing out at the end of the line above the troop of children.

IN FRAU JAHNSON AND HER FATHER I accidentally found people who could tell me how the famous "Ear-Boxing Trial" came about. Frau Jahnsen was in the fourth grade when she had Wittgenstein as her teacher. She was a good mathematician and still remembers how to work problems in solid geometry, but nevertheless often received "a box on the ear."

Her father, a "peculiar" person (by which I mean that he is the one person who has only bad things to report about Wittgenstein), appears to have been keenly on the lookout for an opportunity to "get Wittgenstein into trouble." A woman lived in his house with her foster-child. The boy was frail. One day he received a couple of boxes on the ear, and is supposed to have been carried to the office unconscious. I am convinced that this is an overstatement. In any case, the long-desired moment had come for Herr Piribauer—even though this child was nothing to do with him. He ran into the school and made as big an uproar as possible, shouting and threatening Wittgenstein with a lawsuit. On the strength of that Wittgenstein decided to say farewell to the school forever. It is said that the next day he was no longer there. I am certain that there was no trial.¹⁷ I assume that he had realised that his patience was insufficient for teaching little children, and that the gulf between him and the local residents was too great.

IN OTTERTHAL Wittgenstein brought to a close his six years of activity as an elementary teacher. But that was not quite the end. A few years later, when Frau Jahnsen was already married, Wittgenstein appeared once again in Otterthal. It could have been in 1933 that he visited his old friend Father Neururer and his former cook, the wife of Farmer

¹⁷ Mrs Hausmann and Professor Bartley disagree on this point. Unfortunately I have been unable to resolve the matter. The disagreement may in part result from the ambiguity of the word *Prozess*—process or trial. In a letter to Director Rudolf Koder, Wittgenstein mentions that he is required by a judge in Gloggnitz to be psychologically examined by a court psychologist in Vienna in connection with the alleged mistreatment of a child.

This reference to a judge does not necessarily mean that Wittgenstein was involved in a full-scale trial. It may have involved nothing more than a preliminary hearing, and could have been on an even more informal basis. Wittgenstein did not discuss the matter further with Director Koder, and statements made by others who knew Wittgenstein are very vague, mentioning only in passing that Wittgenstein had some trouble at this time. In any case, Professor Bartley's claim in his book that "in any event, Piribauer and his neighbors in Otterthal instituted legal proceedings against Wittgenstein" (AV, p. 127; BV, p. 89) is mistaken. Mr Piribauer, in a recent statement for the Wittgenstein Verein of Kirchberg and Trattenbach, in the possession of Dr Adolf Hübner, has said that he did not involve himself further with Wittgenstein after the day of their argument, did not contact the police, did not appear as a witness at a trial, and has no knowledge of any trial taking place.

Those in the Vienna area interested in this matter speculate that the doctor to whom the child was taken may have been required by law to contact the police; however, no police or court records have been found, and it now seems unlikely that any will be. It is also unlikely that Wittgenstein fled from Otterthal. Wittgenstein was probably suspended from his duties, and returned to Vienna until the matter was settled. This is the procedure that would be followed today if such an incident occurred. It is conceivable that the child's poor health may have been partly responsible for the outcome of Wittgenstein's punishment, since I am informed that the boy died of leukemia two years later.

Traht. He went to the houses of each of his former pupils and apologised for his rudeness to those he had so wanted to help. He apologised in simple words without giving psychological explanations and without trying to gloss it over. That was the final conclusion of his activity there and to the story of the "totally insane fellow" who wanted to introduce advanced mathematics to our elementary-school children.

According to everything that has been related here concerning Wittgenstein, he seems to be becoming a legendary figure. I have not written down what seemed to me to be improbable. For instance, a soldered tin can with some pieces of writing in it is alleged to have been buried by him with the help of the children in a corner of the Otterthal schoolhouse (an account by Alexander Gruber, a farmer in Otterthal).

To a Hostel Warden

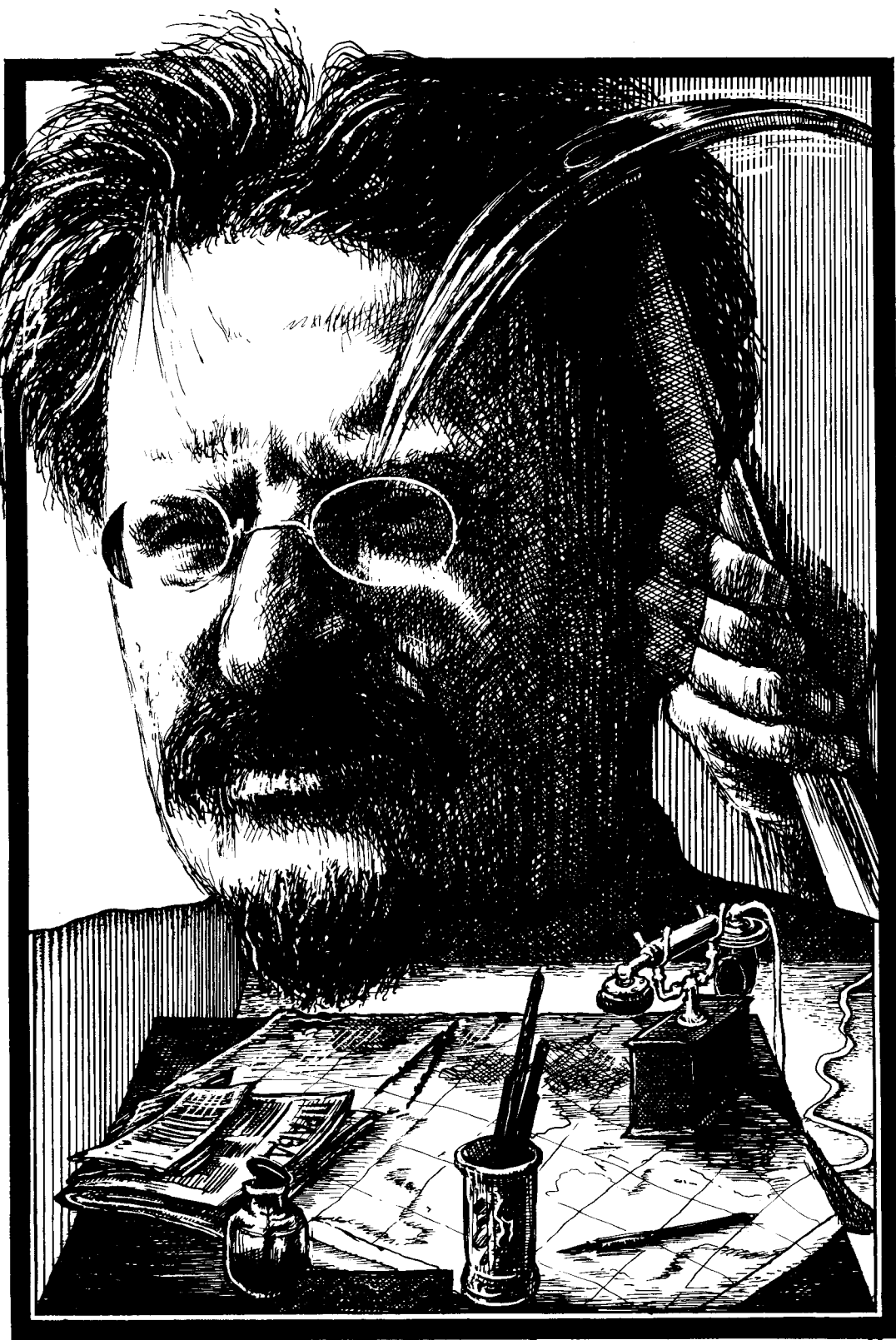
You complain, Reverend Sir,
that the young Arabs living in your hostel
sit every afternoon undressing
every girl who passes through the lounge
and that the girls do not like it.

For one who is well travelled
and obviously so understanding,
I am surprised, Reverend Sir,
that you are so insensitive
to the problems of these young Arabs.
Surely you must know that they would
not behave like that in their own countries.

You must surely be aware
that they come from countries
where some women still wear veils,
where death by stoning is still
a possible penalty for adultery,
where even in universities
the sexes do not mix freely.

If you had grown up as they have
and then had the good fortune
to come to this wonderful land,
the Land of the Free and Easy,
where there is no moral reason
why anybody should not do anything,
where ass-tight trousers prevail,
where sex is everywhere
and often starts quite early,
you too, Reverend Sir,
would happily undress the girls,
even on a Sunday.

Raymond Tong



SPAV

Alice Rühle-Gerstel

No Verses for Trotsky

A Diary in Mexico (1937)

WHEN WE READ in Cuautla in December [1936] that the Cardenas government had granted Trotsky asylum—and Fritz [Otto Rühle's son-in-law] rang us to confirm the news—we were delighted. In fact we had no specially close relationship to Trotsky.

I had various memories, starting with my half-heroic, half-sentimental admiration of 1917 when I had picked up a picture of him—a postcard showing him with a stand-up collar and a bushy moustache—in a socialist bookshop in the Gumpendorferstrasse in Vienna and pinned it up over my bed. Then that party game in Prague, probably in 1919, when my brother signed himself “Trotsky” in my family album. Our agitation and my bursting into tears when Otto arrived in Vienna in October 1927 and his first words to me after months of separation were: “Trotsky’s been expelled from the Party. It’s the end of the Russian Revolution.” An argument with Otto about the

“United Front”, in Dresden around 1930, when I wanted to join the Trotskyists, purely for the sake of being somehow “involved”—without really knowing what the Trotskyists stood for. Discussions—no, just conversations with Wolfi Salus in the Café Elektra. And the many times I had wanted to—but never did—send Trotsky a telegram of sympathy when yet another country had deported him. And Otto’s critical rejection of his policies and his portrayal of Trotsky as an arrogant, stern, and somewhat theatrical revolutionary hero. All in all, a pretty confused picture. . . . Nevertheless, we were very glad.

It was so marvellous that Trotsky was coming to Mexico—for him *and* for us! Suddenly the ideological differences fell away; all we were aware of was the togetherness of being exiled in Mexico; and we felt very close to him.

Then there were contradictory reports in the newspapers, with Fritz, of course, knowing all

LEON TROTSKY was murdered in 1940 by one of Stalin’s agents who hunted him down in Mexican exile. Although almost half-a-century has gone by, interest in him and his ideas has never quite subsided. Isaac Deutscher’s three-volume biography, massive in its detail (and in its piety), is still selling in paperback book shops and still serves to light candles for the handful of followers who continue to dream of World Revolution by following the true (if so often betrayed) Marxist-Leninist path. Here and there small groups of “Trotskyists” manage to come into positions of power on the European Left—as in the “Militant Tendency” (attractively supported by Miss Vanessa Redgrave) which has been aggravating the ideological disputes in the British Labour Party. But, by and large, the ideas are of little more than antiquarian interest. The person, however, can still fascinate.

This remarkable memoir, which we publish for the first time in English, was among the papers of the Rühles—Otto was a well-known German socialist, Alice was an Austrian psychologist and a writer—who had taken refuge in Mexico in the 1930s. They lived in

understandable political isolation, for in Mexico the anti-Nazi movement—the “Free Germany” committee (with Anna Seghers, Ludwig Renn, Bodo Uhse, André Simon Katz, Egon Erwin Kisch, et al.)—was firmly in Stalinist hands. When Trotsky arrived in 1937, they found friendship and even comradeship. Even so, political differences were always in danger of erupting. Alice Rühle-Gerstel’s handwritten notebook (only recently published by Alice Rühles’ executor, Stephen Kalmar) moves along a sensitive line between ideology and friendship.

In June 1943 Otto Rühle died of a heart attack. That same day (as she long ago, confiding in Manès Sperber, said she would do) Alice committed suicide. Kalmar organised the double burial, at which a handful of friends spoke (Victor Serge, Marcel Piveri, Julian Gorkin). Among her papers in the 3rd floor Mexico City flat from which she jumped to her death were the manuscripts of a novel, poems and short stories, translations, and this fragmentary notebook about Trotsky in 1937 (which J. A. Underwood has translated from the German).

M.J.L.

about it from Diego Rivera.¹ Rumours were rife: Trotsky was going to live on a closely guarded ranch away from the capital, but then we would hear something completely different. We celebrated Trotsky's arrival in advance with Mendizabal and O'Gorman. Through Diego Rivera, O'Gorman offered his house, while we volunteered to contribute money and wanted to invite Rivera, Mendizabal, O'Gorman, and others to form a relief committee.

IT NEVER CAME to that, though, because everything had already been organised better on an official level and also Trotsky arrived sooner. No one knew where he was going to land. We heard only at the last moment from Fritz, who had been with Diego Rivera to see the Mexican president. President Cardenas wanted to provide train, car, aeroplane, bodyguard, everything. Trotsky landed at Tampico, on the 9th of January 1937. Fritz drove down in his car to meet him at Lecheria, where Trotsky was to leave the train in order to slip unobserved into Mexico City by car in the middle of the night. One or two people came to hear of it, however, and immediately it was in the paper. Trotsky and his wife drove on to Mexico City in Fritz's car at sixty-miles-an-hour till they got to Diego Rivera's house in the Avenida Londres in the suburb of Coyoacan.

Otto and I went over to Coyoacan around four in the afternoon. I was very excited. It's a very strange experience, meeting such a hero twenty years after one's romantic enthusiasm for him—and with him, too, now in exile. . . .

THERE WERE several people standing around on the patio. After a couple of minutes Trotsky came through from the back of the house into the living-room. He embraced Otto and shook me warmly by the hand. We all sat down on some of those primitive leather chairs that the Mexican Indios make in the villages and that, apart from a table and a few bookshelves, were the only furniture in the large, dimly-lit room. I felt very embarrassed.

Trotsky was very much at his ease, cheerful, quick in his movements, almost youthful. He behaved like a lord of the manor receiving his villagers, in other words without a trace of condescension but with the most delicate emphasis on absolute equality, combining extreme courtesy with complete informality. Or like an old doctor seeing

ex-patients again and being really interested in what has become of their former ailments.

He looks quite different from his pictures and quite, quite different from the way I had imagined him. The first thing that struck me, and that continued to preoccupy me throughout the hour we spent with him was that he has *blue* eyes, for goodness' sake! It had never occurred to me that Trotsky could have blue eyes. Why not? That blue somehow colours his whole appearance. They are not like Otto's blue eyes, loyal, limpid, sometimes gentle, sometimes furiously angry eyes. They are like a child's eyes, perhaps also a doctor's eyes. That was my first impression and it is still, if with some modification, my chief impression of him: childlike, naive, innocent. They are deeply innocent eyes, innocent in the sense of a naive faith in the future of mankind, in himself, and in other people, a person who has no doubts because doubting would make him sad, because he is perhaps afraid of doubt upsetting his equilibrium. Wonderfully sympathetic eyes.

But perhaps it was not until slightly later that I reached this analysis, when I had got to know him and understood him better. Unfortunately I did not have the idea of writing everything down at the beginning. So these reminiscences, begun on 11 October 1937, are really reminiscences of reminiscences. . . .

WHAT ELSE do I remember of that day, besides the eyes? The whitish beard, more good-humoured and at the same time more jaunty than one had imagined—the yellowish, slightly parchment-like, but very delicate skin, with cheeks that blushed easily—delicate veins on the forehead, a straight, powerful nose, the neck wrinkled and white above the soft collar, an old woman's neck—the whole face is not exactly virile, but then neither is it feminine; it's like the face of an elderly child. He has plain, fine, powerful hands—strong, shapely, and not particularly long fingers with well-kept nails, hands that look as if they are washed often and carefully. I am reminded briefly of the passage in his book *My Life* when he goes to Odessa to school and the woman he lodges with shows him how to wash his hands and clean his nails. From the look of those hands, it might have been only the day before that she had shown him.

HE WAS WEARING a worn, slightly darned, but quite respectable grey sports suit with plus-fours, a soft white shirt, and a dark-red tie. He has a quick springy walk, holding himself very straight but not stiffly so. And he was wearing glasses (what sort of specs?)—all one sees is those piercing eyes.

He has a high-pitched, slightly nasal voice and articulates very clearly, occasionally punctuating

¹ The famous Mexican painter was a great admirer of Trotsky around 1937. He also thought highly of Otto Rühle, whose portrait he painted.

with “eh eh”, but only when looking for the right word; he does not do it when he is speaking Russian. He speaks German with us, and French when Diego Rivera is there. He speaks both languages almost perfectly and with great elegance, selecting beautiful and unusual words in a way that shows that his knowledge of these languages is derived largely from academic literature, although in between he also uses very general expressions.

I was much too confused that day to listen closely to the conversation. He told us about his voyage on the small Norwegian freighter that had brought him to Mexico, about how pleasant the captain had been and how closely he had been watched (he was not allowed to listen to the radio, not told where he would be landing, etc.). Their departure had been so hurried that his wife had had only two hours to do all the packing. (We could see a great many crates out on the patio and a number of plain hold-alls in the room.)

Trotsky was bitterly ironical on the subject of Norway, which under pressure from Russia had first imprisoned and then deported him. He had told the Norwegian Minister of Justice, a Social Democrat: “You will pay for this some day. Think of me when you find yourself in exile. . . .”²

His complaints sounded neither personal nor “soft”, but neither did they sound proud. He understood, of course, why he had been treated as he had, but he seemed to be still angry about it. He was delighted to have been granted asylum in Mexico but without being over-enthusiastic. He did not seem to be fully aware of what in fact it meant, namely his salvation from certain death; rather as if he had an inner conviction that there would always be a way out for him.

“The only friendly thing on the entire trip was the ocean”, he said, and he chuckled because the sentence had come out so well. Then he told us with almost boyish glee about how he had managed to outwit the detective who was always following him (this was in Paris before the War); he used to get in the *Métro*, the detective would get in too, and just before the doors closed Trotsky hopped out again and waved his hat at the astonished policeman. . . . Later he had bumped into him again somewhere and said to him, “You were really awful to me in Paris that time. . . .” He laughed with pleasure at the memory. Apart from that he said very little about himself and his experiences, rather asking us about our own: how long had we been here, could we speak Spanish yet, where did we live, how did we like it, how was our health? Just like a good doctor seeing old patients again.

² Following the occupation of Norway in 1940 the minister in question was indeed forced to flee the country.

³ Georg Ledebour was a leading left-wing Socialist in Germany before the First World War and in the years immediately after it.

OTTO AND HE swapped reminiscences. The first time they had met, in 1907, Trotsky was on the way to or from an important congress. When Otto mentioned this, Trotsky corrected him. He has a fantastic memory for detail and knew exactly how it had been, just that little bit different. . . . The talk turned to people they both knew; Trotsky was amazed and delighted that Ledebour³ is still alive.

After an hour we stood up to go, asking whether we might say hello to his wife and give her a hollow pumpkin filled with Mexican fruit. Natalia came in, very small, very dainty, ashen-faced, with sad, red-rimmed eyes, delicate features, her thin and somehow dishevelled hair dyed bright blonde. In tears she hugged and kissed me, saying the one word “*merci*” over and over again. She was quite overwhelmed; the journey had taken a great deal out of her. We told her to take care, get plenty of rest, and watch what she ate. Trotsky said he had not felt so well for a long time. Nor did he in fact show any traces of exhaustion but was thoroughly bright, breezy, and optimistic. We left.

I felt rather tired—from a surfeit of experience.

SO THAT WAS Trotsky. Blue eyes. And so unaffected, so . . . so Austrian! He gives the impression of a titled Austrian officer of the best sort. . . . There is an amazingly easy-going quality about him. One feels so completely at ease in his company. In fact I very nearly wrote that he was a “*gemütlicher Kerl*.” In that cold, gloomy room we felt as if we had been sitting in a cosy country house with old friends. Whether he knew precisely



OTTO AND ALICE RÜHLE

who Otto was, his political role, etc., we were unable to find out. He certainly behaved as if he did know. He did not seem the least bit Russian, even less Jewish, and even less like a revolutionary, and even less like a refugee in danger of his life! He is fifty-six years old, Otto sixty-two, and Trotsky looks ten years older than Otto; in appearance and in terms of personality he is not exactly young and even less “grown-up”—a child, in spite of his age. A person who makes me immediately want to sit on his lap and put my arms around his neck. . . . It simply does not cross one’s mind that he is also a man, let alone a hero. We have such story-book ideas about heroes. A dear, kind person, to be liked.

A FEW DAYS LATER, Otto went over alone and they talked about old times and people from the movement. . . . Then, a few days after that, we both called on Trotsky again. Sitting in the room was an American woman, whom he introduced to us. The big table had now been pushed into the centre of the room and the luggage cleared away, and on the table there was already a quantity of books and newspapers; he was already at work, studying the Moscow Trials.

Callers were walking about on the patio, and after a while Trotsky excused himself, saying he must deal with them. He stepped outside and we heard him say, “I can give you ten minutes. That’s all.” It was the General speaking. We saw the ladies and gentlemen take various photographs. They were from the American magazine *Life*, and they wanted to have Natalia holding the magazine, but she declined. Later a picture appeared in *Life* showing Trotsky with Otto and me—we had had no idea that we were being photographed.

Otto must have told Trotsky about my difficulties with the Mexican climate as a warning to take care of himself. Trotsky greeted me with anxious and genuinely interested questions about the nature of my problems, wanting to know all the details. I was a little embarrassed, still finding it odd to be on equal terms with a man like Trotsky, so I made light of the matter, but he continued to press me until finally I said, “But surely, that’s of no interest to you, comrade—I mean, it’s not important. . . .” “Not important? It’s very, very important”, he said.

Shortly after Trotsky’s arrival someone told us he could not bear people to smoke in his presence. I know many people, starting with Otto, who do not like my smoking; yet so fanatical a smoker am I that, though my conscience bothers me, I still go on smoking. With Trotsky I don’t. Consequently my mind feels strangely empty and I hear things as if from a long way away, as if I were in an operating theatre or attending some special ceremony. The whole man gives one the feeling that one must not

sully him in any way, not even with cigarette smoke. He seems so pure. Although utterly informal himself, he exudes an atmosphere of formality, good manners, dignity, composure. One cannot imagine him bursting—either into laughter or into tears; he is so contained. There he is in his old suit and crude, scuffed sandals; the room is cheerless and dimly lit; his life is a mess, an appalling mass of complications. One is aware of none of that; one is always having to remind oneself of it. With him, one is aware of an intimacy, a sense of elation. As if one were a better person than one actually is. And one then feels grateful to him. Perhaps that is the secret of “handling people”—being able to give the person you are with a heightened awareness of himself? Although Trotsky does not give me the impression of someone who would want to “handle people.”

We talked of nothing in particular. Written down, it would be dry, rather sterile stuff. Trotsky puts everything he says in fine, rounded sentences, there are no loose ends. It is all sensible, correct, beautiful. But neither witty, nor significant, nor particularly impressive. It may be that we do not know one another well enough yet. I hardly dare open my mouth or even listen. I am constantly having to balance this contradiction inside me: this is Trotsky—and this is really a quite unnecessary conversation. Before he came I wanted to learn a great deal from him, to ask him questions, to get to know him—but after only the first meeting it was completely the other way round . . . one felt the need to tell him things, to give to him, to be friendly and nice to him . . . not because he needs it, no, that too would be wide of the mark . . . but perhaps in order not to disturb the equilibrium that floats all around him. . . . At the same time one knows that around him all is restlessness, tension, passion, dynamism, and that he himself is a wild man, a revolutionary, a hero. How does he manage to be so peaceful and still? Even Otto is all mildness in his presence, and it is certainly not with awe because he is not in awe of him. There are people with whom one cannot be anything but quiet and friendly rather as if one did not want to make them unhappy. As if it lay in our power to make Trotsky unhappy!

We had been over there several times already, either together or separately. Occasionally, feeling lonely and unhappy in the office, I would simply leave and catch a bus to his place. I immediately felt free and light-hearted, without in fact anything in particular having been said.

ON MY second or third visit I arrived to find “something up”—something to do with the news of the Radek/Pyatakov trial in Moscow and the probability that their son Sergei, of whom they had heard nothing for two years, had been arrested

or shot (he was accused of having “poisoned workers”). We exchanged a brief greeting; there was no noticeable change in Trotsky’s manner. He was very busy, with all sorts of people calling to see him and interview him. I did not wish to be in the way—so I went for a drive along the Cuernavaca road with Natalia and Frida.⁴

In the car Natalia cried a little, but she also took a nostalgic delight in the landscape, which reminded her of the Caucasus. We talked about Paris; we all loved Paris. Natalia said, “Come the revolution, we’ll all go to Paris together. . . .” Come the revolution—everything revolves around that. Not even this shattered, tormented, frail little woman ever thinks of having a private life—as if it were a game of chance. As someone else might say, “When I win the lottery” or “When my business takes off. . . .” Not that it is so very different, when all’s said and done: Trotsky’s private life *is* the revolution.

BECAUSE HE WAS so busy with the Trials and because so many people were calling to see him, we used to tell each other we wouldn’t go and visit him. But that was only the ostensible reason. In reality we didn’t have a great deal to say to him. I, who ask so many lesser beings for their advice and who need authorities so much—I have never even thought of asking Trotsky, who after all certainly is an authority, particularly as far as I am concerned.

He always behaves as if he were in our debt. So forthcoming, so warmly sympathetic, so friendly. Not out of formal politeness—and not from a sense of shared convictions, either, as if all comrades were one enormous family—or perhaps it is. There is something of the paterfamilias about him. The fact that Jan had toothache or that Van needed a new raincoat⁵ were matters that seriously concerned him. In fact the subject of health is one that is discussed at embarrassing length. Other people’s health, that is; he never mentions his own.

WHEN THREE OR FOUR weeks had gone by without a visit, one of us would say. “We ought to take a bus to Coyoacan again.” It was not exactly an urgent need. Trotsky for his part has always invited us to come and see him often. And whenever we do, or one of us does, he drops his work immediately and gives us his whole attention. He absolutely refuses to listen to any suggestion that he should carry on working, that we should wait,

⁴ Frida Kahlo was Diego Rivera’s wife and a distinguished Mexican painter in her own right.

⁵ Two of Trotsky’s secretaries and bodyguards.

⁶ Leo Davidovich, i.e. Trotsky.

⁷ Also Trotsky’s secretary.

etc. It is the same even when we visit him on the spur of the moment and arrive unannounced. Perhaps it is part of his life-style, never to keep anyone waiting. We used to notice, too, that Rita, the Russian shorthand-typist, stood up as soon as we appeared on the patio, as if she had instructions to do so.

ONCE WHEN I WAS THERE it started pouring with rain, I could not leave, and when the time came to eat it was taken for granted that I should eat with them. Natalia had made an omelette especially for me. It was my first meal with Trotsky. I had brought him Willi Schlamm’s book, *Diktatur der Lüge*. I talked to Natalia. She was complaining that he worked so much and would not look after himself, despite his old, mysterious trouble that so many doctors had already tinkered with in vain—slight temperature, upset stomach, insomnia. “It is the way he has always been”, Natalia said in her halting French, with the occasional Russian word thrown in. “Back in Moscow, in the Kremlin, they all spent Saturday and Sunday in the country, even Lenin . . . but not L.D.”⁶ He used to say, “We’re campaigning to make people save petrol, and you want us to go on pleasure jaunts ourselves? . . .’ I’m sure he knew that a few litres of petrol wouldn’t do the Soviets any harm, but he was always so strict with himself and with us. Many people sent us food when everything was so short. But he noticed immediately. If there was butter on the table he would ask, ‘Where does the butter come from? We can’t have that—eating butter at a time like this!’ Lenin was much more relaxed in this respect. In the middle of the Civil War he had his two-hour sleep after lunch and no one was allowed to wake him up, no matter what happened. Lenin’s life was so precise—timed to the minute. Our son Liova bumped into him outside the Kremlin one New Year’s morning. ‘Well, and what did you do yesterday?’ Lenin asked. ‘I went to the opera’, the boy said. ‘What about you, comrade Lenin? Where did you see in the New Year?’ ‘I went to bed at nine, as usual’, was Lenin’s reply. Our Liova couldn’t get over it!”

As we sat down at table, Trotsky came in, all briskness and energy. He had already leafed through Schlamm’s book. “I think it’s brilliant”, he said. “Couldn’t you and Otto pick out a few passages and translate them for the Commission?” (That tells me this lunch must have been *after* the session of the Investigating Commission in Mexico.) At the head of the table sat Trotsky and Natalia; I was on his right, with Van beside me and Berny Wolff⁷ opposite. Van has no German, Natalia no English, and Wolff no French—so that most of the conversation was between Trotsky and myself, speaking German and occasionally French. L.D. helped me to food, poured water for me and

the others, and was very anxious that everyone should eat a lot, but it must not be fresh bread; in a basket lay a large number of bread rolls, cut open by his own hand several hours before the meal and allowed to dry out, because that is healthier. Odd, because in his life he cannot have had much time to worry about health, hygiene, regular mealtimes, etc. . . . Or has he? The long years of exile—now some twenty-two in all⁸—have forced him into domesticity and private life, so that perhaps in direct contrast to what one might expect a certain petty-bourgeois quality has entered his daily life. Rigid mealtimes, to give the everlasting sameness of waiting, hiding, planning, and hoping at least some visible characteristics. Once again he reminded me of a feudal aristocrat insisting on order in the family; I can almost imagine him being very strict morally, though not of course in any formal sense. . . . He poured out water, handed round dry rolls, and ate his boiled chicken without fuss, sitting very straight in his chair, while the young men tucked into rare beefsteaks; Natalia had a plate of vegetables and I an omelette with salad. . . . L.D. joked with Van, who looks so young but is already a father, and who might have to go to France to do his military service.

I often ate with the Trotskys after that, always on the spur of the moment, and each time it was the same, so pleasant, so friendly in a measured sort of way, with L.D. often in joking mood, the young men sitting quietly and answering only when he spoke to them, Natalia worried and often wrapped in thought . . . and rather fussy in the execution of her housewifely duties, possibly because she cannot yet communicate with the staff properly in their own language. But Trotsky always sophisticated, relaxed, a king out of uniform. . . .

AT ONE OF THESE lunches—it may even have been the first time, I don't quite remember—the conversation came round, *via* the Furtmüllers and the Adlers, to individual psychology. Lina Furtmüller had visited the Trotskys in France two years before and had once again tried to bring them round to the psychological view of Alfred Adler. . . . I unfolded my own Adlerian standpoint, but Trotsky showed more interest in Freud. I tried to show that while Freud was cleverer, more scientific, more profound, and Adler shallower and woollier, the latter's work did have a solid socialist foundation, whereas Freud's attitude was reactionary in comparison. Trotsky would have none of it: how can science have an "attitude"? The job of science is to research, and politicians then

have to make use of its results in one way or another. . . . If someone studies astronomy or mathematics, he does not have an "attitude"; he researches. . . . If Freud has pointed out to us the laws governing the unconscious, our job is to accept them and put them to work; that is the natural consequence of the division of labour. . . .

I could see we were getting nowhere. At the same time, because I have such a respect for Trotsky as a Marxist and a thinker, I began to doubt my own or rather our own thoroughly considered (we had been working on it for years) and reasoned "ideological research"—but only for a moment.

I soon realised, somewhat ruefully, that Trotsky is rather old-fashioned . . . a case of a bold mind on a rather narrow track. He laid the track himself as a young man, and now he runs on it—and any changes that occur relate purely to improved solidity in the substructure, greater cleanliness in the trains, higher speeds, or new signals—but to leap from the moving train into the field and look out for the aeroplane that may happen to fly over, and then wave to it and make it land and pick one up, or perhaps even to alter one's goal or discover that in any case it can be reached only on foot—oh, no. . . . And once again that feeling of solicitude came over me: "Don't meddle, don't interfere—if you remove so much as a stone the whole edifice will come tumbling down. . . ." I have never shown such consideration as I show to Trotsky—and I even stop myself smoking in his presence. . . .

ONCE WE WENT on an outing. This was fairly early on, just after Jan's arrival. The B.s picked us up and we all drove over to Coyoacan. Trotsky was all ready in sports suit and cap, Natalia in a hat and white high-heeled shoes. Jan and Berny and Diego Rivera's chauffeur. We drove off in two cars. Trotsky and his wife sat in one with the B.s' children and Jan in the front seat. At the Mirador we all got out to enjoy the view, but there were already other cars there and we were immediately surrounded by a lot of people staring at us curiously, Trotsky's picture having appeared so many times in the newspaper. We quickly climbed back into the cars and drove for about two hours until we came to a turning that took us into a beautiful forest. There we wanted to picnic, but between us and the field we wanted to sit in flowed a broadish stream. Otto quickly took off his shoes and socks, waded into the water, and began to build a bridge with stones. Trotsky admired and envied him, but he did not quite dare to go barefoot himself. Before long, however, happy and flushed, he was collecting huge boulders and pieces of timber to help build the bridge. He was really enjoying himself, boyishly happy. We lounged on the grass, doing nothing. Only the children had found a place a little way away and were giving

⁸ Including the years before the Revolution.

their whole attention to the children's supplement of the Sunday newspaper. "You can see who the serious ones are", Trotsky remarked. "We grown-ups are just lazy."

A fire was lit and some soup warmed, we all ate a lot and joked a lot, and after the meal no one really felt like washing-up. Finally five-year-old Peter said peremptorily, "*Trotsky, andale, lava los trastes!* (Trotsky, go and do the washing-up!)"—and while we laughed in embarrassment and all tried to set to work, although we would have preferred a nap, Trotsky was delighted at Peter's impertinence and insisted that he and the boy carry the bowls and cups to the stream, where he knelt down over the water and rinsed them, allowing no one else to help. He seemed really to enjoy not being famous for once and not having to behave as his past, his goal, and his fame laid down that he should. He fitted into the landscape well; one could imagine him being like this when he went fishing or hunting—his harmless hobbies, through the following episode of the butterfly suggested to me that they may not be quite as harmless as all that. . . . But that comes later; I want, if I can, to relate things in order.

Afterwards we lay down again. Natalia alone stood up to go for a walk. She did not come back for a long time, and we began to worry about her and went off looking for her in all directions. Trotsky was the least worried of us, saying that Natalia often went for long walks and had a very good sense of direction. But he became quieter and quieter and eventually said nothing more, and the rest of us were very concerned and fearful as to what might have happened. . . . At last she came back with her arms full of plants and leaves (she adores flowers), hot and contented, her wrinkled old face looking suddenly like a girl's. . . .

We parted in Coyoacan pleased and happy. What a delightful day!

BUT NOW I WANT TO TELL the story about the butterfly. We were having another meal with Trotsky when an enormous and magnificent butterfly flew into the dining-room through the open patio doorway. We were eating, but everyone jumped up immediately and tried to catch the

butterfly. I couldn't understand it—grown men wanting to catch a butterfly! No one succeeded, and we finished our meal. The butterfly had settled somewhere high up, and no one appeared to take any further notice of it.

After a while we got up from the table and I went out on to the patio with Natalia to smoke a cigarette. As I turned, I saw Trotsky in the dining-room. He had just caught the butterfly, and with a confident, graceful gesture he squashed its tiny body between his fingers, like a surgeon cutting open the skin. . . . His face was expressionless and showed no sense of triumph, no regret, nothing. Natalia quickly ran into the bedroom and came back with a needle, an attentive nurse handing the surgeon the right instrument at the right moment. I felt slightly faint, although I really was a surgeon's nurse once; I found it so meaningless, so cruel, so downright inhuman. All right, it was a sentimental reaction, I too had mounted butterflies at home as a child, but to squash them between two fingers in that cold-blooded way. . . .

I was aware of Trotsky's enthusiasm for hunting and fishing, and I suppose an angler has to be able coldly to stick a fish-hook down the pretty trout's throat and the hunter must be indifferent to the dark blood that the hare with his bright, uncomprehending, stupid eyes sees spreading in the grass beside him. Children are like that—and people who make history. Perhaps productivity is inseparable from it . . . but from what? It isn't cruelty, but what is it? Is it something to do with wanting implicitly to reach the goal one has set oneself and not letting anything stand in one's way? I have a lot of thinking to do about this. . . .

THEN CAME THE DAY when Otto was invited to sit on the Commission⁹ and of course accepted immediately. We felt that here would be a platform for airing all the great political issues. At the same time we were aware that it would bring to light the political differences between ourselves and Trotsky, and that this might destroy our beautiful, warm friendship. . . .

Later, when on some occasion or other (or in one of the many newspaper interviews that appeared in the early days) there was mention of the hostility with which Trotsky treated everyone who disagreed with him about the unconditional defence of Russia—depressed at the prospect of a possible rupture of relations, I brought up the subject with Natalia. I was visiting them one day, and as usual they had both asked expressly and with genuine concern about my state of health. In the middle of the conversation—he was not there for a moment, she was rummaging in the perpetually untidy wardrobe, and I was leaning in the bedroom doorway—Natalia said, "We had no idea you suffered periods of melancholy. Your husband told

⁹ In March 1937 the American, English, French, and Czechoslovak committees formed a joint Investigating Commission to review the Moscow trials. A "counter-trial" was to give Trotsky an opportunity to rebut the formidable charges brought against him. In addition to Otto Rühle, the members of this commission were Alfred Rosmer, Wendelin Thomas, Carlo Tresca, Suzanne Lafollette, Benjamin Stolberg, John R. Chamberlain, Carlton Beals, and Francisco Zamorra. Among those who supported and organised the trial were John Dos Passos, James Burnham, Sidney Hook, Norman Thomas, and Reinhold Niebuhr.

us. We've always found you such a cheerful, well-adjusted person. . . . Why is it? What are you so worried about?"

"Well, for one thing, that our beautiful friendship may be about to break up. . . . I sometimes lie awake at night, thinking about it. . . . After all, there are many points on which we disagree. . . . For example, as far as the unconditional defence of Russia is concerned, didn't L.D. write that he had uncompromisingly broken with all the friends who thought otherwise?"

"Oh, Alice! That doesn't mean you two! Not people he's so fond of and thinks so highly of! When it's a question of young people, students he wants to influence and educate, then of course he is very strict, but not with you. . . . That's something you really needn't worry about!"

THE COMMISSION.¹⁰ Great preparations were made, and letters were exchanged between New York and Mexico. I was not in Coyoacan at all during that time. Then slowly the people began to arrive: Dwight Macdonald with the Eisner girl [a painter and niece of Kurt Eisner, the Bavarian socialist leader, murdered in 1919], James T. Farrell, Dr Albert Goldman, who was to be Trotsky's defence counsel at the hearing, and finally the Commission itself—Dewey, Stolberg, Lafollette, Beals . . . and later Finerty as well. It all happened at the Calle Amberes, all the interviewing, talking, and interpreting. Journalists and photographers swarmed round the house. We thought it proper to stay away from Coyoacan throughout that period; then no one could say we had been in private contact with Trotsky beforehand. . . . Not until the day before the hearing did the members of the Commission go out there. Otto told me how Dewey and Trotsky, who had been looking forward to this meeting with such excitement, at first ran straight past without recognising each other. . . .

Great excitement on the first day of the Hearing. The house had been given a second door, telephone booths and wooden railings blocked off the entrance to the Hearing room, lots of chairs set out, lots of

police, the street window bricked up almost to the top, the dining-room turned into an office with large numbers of secretaries working feverishly over countless pieces of paper, several typewriters, in fact everything looking very official. . . .

I was not able to get there until the afternoon; the opening formalities had been in the morning. Beyond the wooden railings Trotsky was passing to and fro between the bedroom, the dining-room, and the back room. When he saw me and I gave him a brief, rather formal greeting from a distance, he came up to the railing and shook me warmly by the hand: "How's the insomnia? Are you sleeping better now?" The man's a saint! Six or eight weeks before I may have mentioned that I was not sleeping. . . . Then we had not seen each other for at least a month, a month that for him had been full of worry and excitement and an enormous amount of work, and now at last the time had come for him to go on trial before the whole world, before millions of people, to justify himself, put his views, speak to the human race. Possibly, despite all the strict controls on admission to the hearing, somewhere in the dimly-lit room the enemy sat waiting to put a swift end to that magnificent life. . . . And at a time like that he thinks of my insomnia! My answer came from the bottom of my heart: "I shall never forget you asking me that for as long as I live!"

I ATTENDED about five sessions, and usually my attention was less than complete because I spent much of the time making a whispered, sentence-by-sentence translation for the benefit of Mexican comrades. The proceedings have in any case been published, so I shall simply try to give my own impressions.

My first impression was of Trotsky's complete ease of manner. For weeks he and his wife and secretaries had been up late every night, reading, hunting up references, sorting out files, compiling dossiers on the different charges, making excerpts, having much of the material translated into English, and writing his great closing speech. One might have expected him to be on the verge of collapse. But only on the last day of the Hearing—after a week of between six and eight hours' interrogation daily as well as tracking down, preparing, and translating the documents mentioned during the proceedings which had to be produced—did he appear tired. Throughout the week he remained fresh and almost gay. He



TROTSKY IN HIS STUDY WITH THE RÜHLES

¹⁰ The Commission sat from 10–17 April 1937 in Diego Rivera's house. The investigating committee was chaired by the eminent American philosopher and educator, John Dewey. Suzanne Lafollette acted as secretary, and the members were the writers Benjamin Stolberg and Carlton Beals and Otto Rühle. John F. Finerty, who had defended Sacco & Vanzetti and also Tom Mooney, had offered his services as legal adviser.

answered every question without the slightest hesitation, clearly and simply, as if he had not been giving information about himself or undergoing what was for him an extremely important test but rather as if he had been delivering a lecture at a working-man's college or giving an interviewer material for his biography. Of course he also felt that the members of the Commission were well-disposed towards him, and he had complete confidence in his case.

He managed the English rather well. His pronunciation was bad, but his vocabulary was enormous and once again I had the impression that it was derived primarily from academic literature. He was an absolute delight to listen to, putting things so marvellously in his awkward English. Someone—I can't remember who it was—said to me during one session, "If he sounds that good in English, what an orator he must have been in Russian!" Many people must have asked themselves the same thing.

Many of the questions put to him were extremely naive. His answers were invariably charming and very skilful, often beginning with the words "There's no simple answer to that . . ." or "The *real* problem, though, is . . ." And then with a didactic feeling for relevance he would put the question into the appropriate context with an astonishing precision of detail yet at the same time taking a broad view. It was said by people who opposed this hearing that, Trotsky being so good an orator, he would "tie the Commission in knots", etc. Not so. There is nothing of the charlatan about him; he is much too simple and natural for that. But the relative ignorance of the members of the Commission (Otto excepted, but his language problems made it difficult for him to follow) forced him willy-nilly into the position of teacher.

DR GOLDMAN asked, "Mr Trotsky, how many children do you have?" and Trotsky said, "I now have two sons." The whole tragedy of this unhappy family lay in that "*now*." And he said it so modestly, with such dignity, as he did what followed concerning the death and suicide respectively of his two daughters, the disappearance of his younger son, and the grave danger threatening his elder son, and all of it simply because they were or are Trotsky's children.¹¹ It brought a lump to one's throat, but he was—I can say it only in French—"*serein*." Pure in heart,

blameless, it's a pity about the children but history marches on. (Later, when Trotsky was going off to San Miguel Regla for a rest, I asked Natalia why she did not go too, and she replied, "Oh, that wouldn't be a rest for either of us. We lie awake at night, and then we talk about the children, and then we're miserable. . . .")

The next question was about when Trotsky had been deprived of his Russian citizenship. Goldman asked, "What did you do when you heard the news?" Trotsky thought for a second before answering. In both real and symbolic terms it had been an enormous blow for him. Then he said, "I wrote an article."

On two occasions during the eight days of interrogation I saw Trotsky angry. When Lafollette read out something in which he was accused of having written reactionary articles for the Hearst press, he leapt to his feet in indignation and delivered a fulminating speech. And the second time was when Beals—who had already irritated Trotsky by the nature of his questions and even more by the coldly inquisitorial tone in which they were put—took up the story about Borodin, whom Trotsky was alleged to have sent to Mexico in 1919 as a Communist emissary. "Tell your informant that he is a liar", he said in a voice of command. Finerty then pointed out to Beals that "gossip" could not be treated as an accusation. (That same day Beals resigned from the Commission.)

The Commission itself was nice, a lot of good-hearted, decent people, but poorly prepared. Apart from the report of the Moscow Trials they had done almost no preliminary reading. Hence the naivety of so many of the questions. One morning when I was there Trotsky gave what was really an elementary lecture on socialism, the revolution, etc. (Incidentally a small, dark woman turned to us during this and asked, "Have you noticed that they're all Jews?" In fact Otto, Dewey, Finerty, Beals, and Lafollette are not, only Goldman and Stolberg. Afterwards the questioner turned out to have been Mrs Beals.)

By the closing stages of the Commission everyone was already dead tired. Trotsky began to read his final speech at about seven in the evening, and no one was listening properly any more (after Goldman's long and rather poor closing speech). Even I went out to the patio for some fresh air at one point, and when I came back Trotsky was no longer reading himself but letting Goldman read the speech for him, and the whole thing rather petered out at the end.

¹¹ Sergei Sedov, the younger son, who had never taken an interest in politics, was condemned in 1936 for "Trotskyist" activities, deported, and shot (probably in 1938). Leon Sedov, the older son, died in 1937 after an appendix operation in a Paris private clinic of mysterious and probably not natural causes.

SHORTLY AFTER his arrival in Mexico the New York Trotskyists called a meeting in New York that Trotsky was to address by telephone from Coyoacan. He was looking forward to it very much

and eagerly studied the text that had been translated into English for him, showing us the manuscript to which he had added accents and other little marks to help him with the unfamiliar pronunciation. He took the matter very seriously, because this was his first opportunity to speak in public since 1932 (when he had given two lectures and made a radio broadcast in Copenhagen).

On the day of the meeting the telephone suddenly would not work, although everything had been thoroughly checked and put in order beforehand. Everyone was running around excitedly, offering advice. In New York a huge crowd was sitting in the hall and waiting to hear from Mexico. Engineers examined the telephone politely and with Mexican slowness, but could find no reason for the fault. Suddenly someone noticed that Trotsky had disappeared. Great agitation. Where could he be? The audience in New York had already been waiting for two hours. When there seemed to be no hope of hearing Trotsky's voice, [George] Novack (or was it [Max] Shachtman?) read out the speech, which had been air-mailed to New York in advance.

Trotsky arrived home about midnight, having spent two hours driving around on his own; he had been to the main Post Office, the Telegraph Office, the Ministry of Transport, and the telephone companies to try to get the call put through somehow. The thing was so important to him that he had disregarded the very necessary precautions and even shown no consideration for Natalia and the secretaries. Everyone agreed that the call had been sabotaged by the Stalinists. But the investigation got bogged down, nothing emerged, and a disheartened Trotsky has never, so far as I know, repeated the attempt to establish telephone contact with the outside world.

THE COMMISSION finished its work on a Saturday, and on the Sunday Trotsky was invited to lunch by Mrs George. We went along to coffee afterwards. Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, Dewey, Lafollette, Finerty, and Stolberg were also there. Everyone was in a festive mood, cheerful and yet dignified. Trotsky was asked about all kinds of people, and he characterised them in a few well-chosen words. Unfortunately I cannot recall a single one of those portraits, except that he described Tukhachevsky—then still a Marshal in all his glory¹²—as a capable, energetic, but nevertheless second-rate soldier. . . .

Journalists thronged the steps outside. Lunch

was served in the dining-room, which overlooked the garden. When all the rest had gone, Trotsky gave Dewey too a farewell embrace and said, "I have realised that American liberalism exists as a fact!" Two days later, when Dewey was leaving and we all accompanied him to the station, Dewey looked down from the Pullman car and said, "One face is missing here, Trotsky's!" The two had greatly enjoyed each other's company; they were well suited, both of them so correct, so sincere, so clean.

We noticed on several further occasions subsequently how well Trotsky got on with liberals and democrats and also how much importance he attached to their opinions and their agreement—quite contrary to the Marxist view and to Marxist "morality", as if what mattered to him above all else was to be clean and honest, completely forgetting how relative those terms are, although of course intellectually he knows very well.

A WEEK OR TWO AFTER the end of the Commission we went over to Coyoacan once again. I went up to Trotsky and—in the Mexican way (which I have adopted) of embracing everyone you have not seen for some time, and because Otto and he always embrace, and because I am so fond of him and remembered his splendid bearing before the Commission—I embraced him and said, "You were marvellous!" And he kissed me on both cheeks. Since that day we have made a habit, when saying hello and goodbye, of exchanging warm, friendly kisses that do not embarrass me one bit and that are given and received as a matter of course.

Once we arrived to find him ill in bed. We drank tea in the bedroom, and as he lay there looking so yellow and thin and old in his Spartan bed in that gloomy, inhospitable room I felt a surge of emotion and said, "I love you!" He took my hand and kissed it. Since then he has often kissed my hand, and I have found it natural and agreeable, though I loathe the custom ordinarily.

I HAD BOUGHT Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*, and Otto and I had read some of it and discussed it at length. I took the book with me on one visit and asked him to inscribe it for me. He wrote a few lines for Otto and me and took me to task for having bought the book instead of asking him for it. He took a copy of the English edition from the bookshelf and wrote in it in German, "To my dear Comrade Alice Rühle with kind regards and in deep gratitude. 2/VI/1937."

I was quite overcome. "What are you grateful to me for, for heaven's sake?"

He smiled shyly and a little archly: "Well, let's

¹² In May 1937 Tukhachevsky was one of a series of top generals to be charged with high treason, condemned, and executed.

just say I am grateful to you!"

I really did not understand. He surely can't have been referring to that little bit of translation work. I've really done nothing for him at all. Not even "entertained" him. Perhaps that is precisely what he is grateful for? Or it could be simply a meaningless phrase. Except that a man like Trotsky never writes meaningless phrases. Every word is precise, saying exactly what it wants to say. Perhaps he is grateful to me because I never want anything of him, never even involve him in discussions or ask, "What do you think of this or that. . . ?"

Once, on the occasion of the second Moscow Trial, I asked him, "What makes it possible, psychologically possible, for an intelligent man like Radek to make such statements? What does he hope to achieve?"

Very gently, like a father, he answered, "A fanatical love of Russia and the fact that the people who are arrested are given the idea that in that way they are saving the country and the Party. They are kept locked up for months without contact with the world or with one another. Their view of things becomes distorted, and then they are promised that things will be made easier for their families and ultimately they themselves set free. . . ." His analyses are set out more clearly and in greater detail than I have retained in memory in the closing speech from the hearing under the heading "Why Did They Confess?"

Willi Schlamm, too, in his *Diktatur der Lüge*, made certain shrewd assumptions on the subject. Through us Schlamm sent Trotsky an inscribed copy of the book. When I took it over to Trotsky—about the beginning of May—he quickly read a few pages and liked it very much indeed. Then he read the whole book. So did we. The beginning and the end are full of a whining moralism. No Marxist analysis but a polemic against the "dialecticians", whom he always puts in inverted commas; pretty unpleasant. I wrote him (Schlamm) a very strong letter. Trotsky's opinion was the same as ours, except that it was even a bit stronger, because in Schlamm's preface, after a few respectful words for Trotsky as a person, he had dissociated himself in critical terms from Trotsky's policies.

We asked Trotsky several times whether he did not want to reply to Schlamm. He kept putting it off and eventually said he would write Otto a letter about the book, since it had come to him through Otto. He never did so, and we learned from another source that Trotsky had "slaughtered" Schlamm in an article. He never showed it to us. Nor did he ever show us another article that was brought to our attention, in which without naming names he attacked Otto politically. He avoided any kind of political discussion. So did Otto, out of respect and affection and in order not to spoil the beautiful harmony amongst us émigrés. Until the Wendelin Thomas case. But I shall come to that.

I OFFERED Trotsky my modest knowledge of Russian as well as any other assistance from the outset. He always used to thank me warmly and decline on the grounds of my own burden of work and my poor health. Moreover he really did not seem to need me: Jan was doing the field work, Van the French, Berny Wolff the English, Rita the Russian things, and Natalia puts in a lot of work herself. For the preparations for the Commission a number of other young people came in.

At the beginning of May they said Trotsky's closing speech was to be published in Spanish as soon as possible, and I was given six chapters to translate. To do the job properly, I asked for a copy in Russian as well as the English version. As we were sitting there and I was leafing through the Russian original at random, comparing it with the English translation, I spotted some inaccuracies and said as much in an undertone. Trotsky, who is somewhat hard of hearing, nevertheless heard what I said. With a gesture that—at least as far as I am concerned—is characteristic of him, he tapped several times with the flat of his hand on my hand holding the manuscript and said, "Very good, very good, excellent! You really have a great gift for languages!" He beamed at me like a teacher at a prize pupil. On the basis of this random inspection he asked me to edit the whole booklet. I translated my chapters quickly, but because the others took longer and longer over theirs the thing dragged on for months. Eventually, with only two chapters missing, I was asked whether I could quickly do them as well. Although I did so immediately and I keep asking about it, the booklet has yet—almost a year later!—to come out. . . .

IN CONNECTION WITH Schlamm, I'd like to mention Trotsky's treatment of two other young authors. Wollenberg, a former general of the Red Army and a rather wild fellow—now out of the Party and living in poverty in Prague—sent him through us manuscripts about the Red Army and a sort of Utopian comedy in which he ridiculed the absurdity of the charges (Trotsky as a "Gestapo agent", etc.). Trotsky never talked about them and months later had Van give the manuscripts back to us without comment. A certain Wolf Weiss sent me a rough manuscript entitled "In the Jails of the GPU"—a very impressive piece of writing. Trotsky immediately adopted it and sent it to friends in America, who have spent months trying to get it published—so far without success. Trotsky has asked me to look after the correspondence, and Diego Rivera to illustrate the book.

In the meantime Trotsky himself went away—this must have been in June. Through Mexican friends he was given the opportunity of staying completely incognito on a *hacienda* in the State of Hidalgo, with only Sixto, Frida's chauffeur, a loyal

and absolutely trustworthy person, and Sergeant Casas of the Mexican police going with him. (He had been there earlier with the B.s to see for himself whether it was suitable. No one knew anything of the plan; no one knew them; but when they got out of the car at the *hacienda* the manager ran up to them, warmly kissed Trotsky's hand, and said, "Your Grace, I've seen your picture in the paper—what an honour, what an honour. . .!") Trotsky had the house to himself and went riding, hunting, and fishing, though he spent most of the time in bed, resting.

He sent us several postcards in his vigorous, simple hand, and in one of them he expressed concern about Natalia, who had an unpleasant eye disorder and was undergoing some painful dental treatment. I promptly rang Natalia and asked when I might come to see her. She said, "Come tomorrow, would you? L.D. is here for the day. . . You'll appreciate that I'd like to be alone with him!" He had hardly been gone a week, and he was already so homesick he had had to come back—and not just for the day but for an evening and a night, like a secret lover. How deeply attached he is to that wan little woman, and how much his life revolves around her!

Next morning, at her insistence, he drove back to the *hacienda*, but again he could bear no more than a week of his lonely rest-cure. He wrote to Natalia twice a day. She read me a bit from one letter: "Imagine—there I am sitting by the fire with my plus-fours unbuckled at the knee, my shirt open, no tie on, and the proprietor of the estate arrives unannounced with relations and friends whom he wants to introduce to me. No chance of getting myself straight, they were all around me, and me with my trousers flapping loose and no tie. . . ." He is always so correct, so neat, so precise—he devoted all of half-a-page to the incident.

While Trotsky was at the *hacienda*, Van had an appendix operation and Natalia an operation on her jaw. He came back in a hurry. Later he went back to San Miguel and several times to Taxco, to the cottage that Mrs Iturbe places at his disposal, complete with staff. We even visited them there once, on 12 October. But more of that later.

In May I went down with measles. Trotsky rang up every day for a fortnight to find out how I was, and he sent me flowers from his garden. All my other friends forgot me. Trotsky does not forget, whether for good or evil.

ONCE, JUST AS I was going, I took a copy of my poem "*Wirtschaft 1935*" from my briefcase and left it with him. He rang me up the next day: "My dear comrade! It's magnificent! You really have such a command of language. . . I was quite carried away!" So another time I took him one

or two more of my political poems. Not long afterwards, when we met again, he said, "All your poems are so melancholy, so pessimistic. . . ." I replied, "But not '*Wirtschaft 1935*', surely?"

"Well", said Trotsky, "at least that looks up at the end. Magnificent, magnificent. . . Listen, since you can write such magnificent verse, wouldn't you like to compose a poem about the Fourth International?"

I was flabbergasted. How could a man of such culture, such refinement, such familiarity with literature say such a thing in earnest? But he was in complete earnest. For him everything is a means to an end, and there is only one end, world revolution, and the way to world revolution is *via* the Fourth International. It's obvious! Personal poetry? All well and good. But if a person can write—as he said of me—"magnificent" poems, then let her do something for the cause! I was quite at a loss, because in the first place I can't write verse to order and in the second place I certainly couldn't do it on the subject of the Fourth International, which I do not regard as the right way to world revolution. I got out of it by saying with a smile, "Comrade L.D., I only write poetry when I'm so desperate I can't stand it any more!"

OUR VISITS usually fell in the afternoon, around four o'clock, when each time a delightful and elegant tea would be served at which L.D. would insist that everybody tuck in. Occasionally I had meals there, particularly in August when I was doing the Commission work.

Once I was there with Otto for Sunday lunch. When I was there on my own the food was very simple with just an extra place laid for me, but for Otto Natalia had prepared a veritable banquet. L.D. and Otto talked about old times, dropping a host of names from the old Social-Democrat movement. I chatted a bit with Natalia across the table, translating for her now and then because she was having difficulty in following the conversation in German. Trotsky, too, kept on turning to her in a kindly way to say something in Russian. The young people at the table listened in silence.

Trotsky was telling us about the first time he had been invited to Kautsky's home in Berlin, and how Kautsky had been discussing something with Bebel (or Bernstein?) and he had listened in silence with the feeling: "These are the great men of the movement, and I am an unknown young man. . ."—when suddenly he turned to the youngsters at the table and said with a laugh, "In twenty or thirty years' time Van or Jan will be sitting at table, saying, 'When I was a young man I sat listening to Trotsky having a discussion with Rühle and did not dare to take part in the conversation. . . .' " It's always the same. . . .

WHEN ONE STEPS FROM the bright, sunny patio with its orange tree always in fruit, its chayote, which climbs up the big eucalyptus and bears a prickly fruit that often appears on the table at mealtimes as a vegetable, its purple bougainvillea, its stone fountain in the centre, and the many old-Indian idols of clay and stone lying around everywhere, when one steps from that patio into the living-room, a cold chill runs down one's spine. The street windows are bricked up, with curtains drawn across them. All the light comes from the door leading to the patio.

The only room with any sun is the shorthand-typist's. It overlooks the street and is not safe enough to be used as a living-room, although the police have set up their hut across the street and can examine everyone who approaches the house. The bedroom is small and shabby and lies between two other rooms in which the secretary-bodyguards sleep on primitive beds. The bathroom is reached through either the kitchen or the dining-room, and from the big study Trotsky takes a short cut across the patio to get to the bathroom or his bedroom. In the rainy season and on cold evenings this is not a pleasant trip. He always wears a thick navy-blue jacket with a high buttoned collar and thick woollen socks; Natalia is always wrapped in a large shawl.

Lying on every table is a revolver, and even going to the lavatory everyone takes one with him. On one such occasion Van's revolver—Van is the good-looking, fair-haired Frenchman who is in fact a very gifted physicist by profession but whose enthusiasm for Trotsky is such that for some eight years he has acted as his secretary, with all the sacrifices in terms of free time, comfort, family life and security that that office implies—Van's revolver went off, which everyone found very amusing. What a situation. . . .

The house being so unsuitable, they were all on the look-out for something better. But they could find nothing. It must have a high wall and the windows must look out on the garden, and houses like that are either very dilapidated, old-fashioned, rat- and vermin-ridden, or impossibly expensive. Rivera is letting them use his house together with staff and his car and chauffeur.

Trotsky pays for the food as well as footing the not inconsiderable bill for his international correspondence with its countless telegrams, air-mail letters, and newspaper and magazine subscriptions. The secretary-bodyguards work for nothing; Rita, a Polish Jewess who did not live in the house, used to get 200 pesos. Their living costs were defrayed by Trotsky's writing and journalistic work. His income does not go very far. Jan would

occasionally drop mysterious hints about some money needing to be raised—probably collections were held among friends. So the question of a move was eventually shelved and various alterations made to the house to make it more comfortable and safe; a wall was built in the back garden, etc. When we moved into our house in January and the Trotskys came to visit us, Natalia said wistfully, "We'll never have it as nice as this again—just the two of us in our own house. . . ."

The young secretaries are kind, intelligent, and touchingly devoted—but they are always there with their admiration, their sense of duty, their revolvers, their eternal vigilance; L.D. and his wife are never alone, can never retire, never disappear for a while, never go for a walk by themselves or even drive around in the car; there is always a bodyguard with them. Poor prisoners, noble victims of an idea!

EVEN IF HE BORE this exile—ten years now!—in resentful, grumbling inactivity he would merit sympathy. But Trotsky remains friendly, alert, good-humoured, always concerned for the well-being of those around him, and with an insatiable appetite for work, whether—as he spent almost the whole of 1937 doing—tracing all kinds of files, documents, and exchanges of letters for the Commission's benefit, comparing them and getting hold of them by various complicated means from all over the world, or making memoranda, receiving the press, dictating, writing articles, reading proofs, and this year also writing *Les Crimes de Stalin*—the great summing-up of the Commission, which makes a fat booklet—and working on his biography of Lenin. All with quiet, modest self-assurance.

One day Trotsky told me as I arrived that at last he had seen Rivera's frescos at the *Secretaria de Educacion*.¹³ He had been wanting to see them for months, but it was too dangerous, the Ministry being the stronghold of the Mexican Stalinists. Finally he had rung B. one Sunday and driven there.

"I was deeply moved", Trotsky said. "I believe Diego to be the most significant artist alive today. It's sublime! And do you know what affected me most of all? Here one is, living next door to this Diego, seeing him nearly every day, talking to him as one would to any Tom, Dick or Harry, shaking him by the hand, and completely forgetting that one should really approach the man only in humility and reverence. . . ."

I looked him in the eye and said, "So now you can imagine how I feel, talking to you as if you were any Tom, Dick or Harry. . . ." He gave me a slightly puzzled look and then said awkwardly, "No, no, it's different with me. I'm no Diego Rivera. People can and should talk to me like a perfectly ordinary person. . . ."

¹³ The Ministry of Education in Mexico City has some very important frescos by Diego Rivera on the history of the Mexican revolution.

ONE DAY IN EARLY JULY Van arrived with a letter in Russian that Trotsky had written to Wendelin Thomas in answer to his letter.

Wendelin Thomas, a member of the New York judicial commission and a non-Party left-winger whom Otto vaguely remembered as a former Social-Democratic member of the German parliament, had written to Trotsky on behalf of the Commission to find out what Trotsky thought of the "Bolshevik methods" that Thomas regarded as the root of all evil. He particularly wanted Trotsky's opinion of the 1921 Kronstadt mutiny and the Machno movement.¹⁴ The letter had been courteous, respectful, and correct. I was to translate Trotsky's reply into German as soon as possible.

When I had read the reply I was shocked and perplexed. Trotsky had adopted a superior, condescending, "Who do you think you are, young man?" sort of tone, ignored the main issues completely, turned the discussion in a different direction, and in the end become frankly insulting. I read the letter to Otto, and he was as shocked as I had been. Not that we disagreed with him on the question of Machno, Kronstadt—and methods of political struggle. It was because his tone would inevitably annoy the writer of the letter and this might possibly have embarrassing public consequences for Trotsky. He had written, as Otto put it, the sort of heavy-handed denial that used to be put out by the Bolshevik party press. . . . It was not the sort of level that, for reasons of personal respect and sympathy, we wanted to see Trotsky sink to.

Had Trotsky been there I would have taken it upon myself to go to him and discuss the matter. But he had driven to San Miguel (or was it Taxco?) that same day for a few days' rest. He had left this letter as well as others he had dictated to be dealt with in his absence; to write or telephone to San Miguel about it seemed out of the question, and in any case I had been given the letter to translate, not to say what I thought of it. Otto and I stayed up late that night, discussing what to do. In the morning I rang Van and told him of our misgivings. Van, of course, thought Trotsky's letter "right", so there was nothing I could do but supply the German translation. Wendelin Thomas subsequently replied in a pamphlet published by his group, referring also to the fact—of which we were unaware—that Trotsky's reply had meanwhile appeared

in the Trotskyist *Bulletin* or the *Quatrième Internationale*; but not the letter that had occasioned it. Several weeks went by; Trotsky was still away; the thing was not that important after all; and it was not until some time later, when we happened to bump into Jan in town, that the subject came up again. Jan naturally took the opposite view to us.

TWO DAYS AFTER that—it must have been the end of August—I was in Coyoacan. I got there early to look through some documents for the Commission. Trotsky, still in his dressing-gown, said he was sorry he could not talk to me but he was expecting some American visitors. Soon he re-emerged in a white linen suit and white sandals and saw some visitors. I was working in Van's room, the door to the patio was of course open, and Trotsky called me out.

I cannot recall how the conversation began, but I do know that shyness, deference, and caution all inclined me to want to avoid a theoretical discussion. Trotsky, however, insisted on talking about Russia and Germany. He contested Otto's view that the two countries have the same structure. I replied that though they may have come from different bases—Germany from private capitalism and Russia from the beginnings of socialism—now under Hitler and Stalin both countries were state-capitalist.

Trotsky would hear nothing of "state capitalism." He tried to persuade me that expropriation can take place only along revolutionary lines and that there is only capitalism or socialism, capitalism being invariably private—despite state concentrations—and socialism invariably collective.

I argued that, of course, the expropriation of state-owned capitalism could be accomplished only by revolutionary means but that one could imagine, and in Germany indeed already see, that in the final phase of the capitalist crisis individual entrepreneurs believe they are better off nationalising their concerns and securing a high profit margin for themselves as chairman of the board on a fat salary or whatever it might be. Trotsky thought otherwise. Even if individual entrepreneurs preferred such solutions for themselves, they would no longer be able to secure the futures of their sons and grandsons and that would be that as far as they were concerned!

We argued for a long time, with Trotsky laughingly rebuking me for not thinking Marxistically and dialectically, yet failing to convince me. I have forgotten the details. But because this—apart from the brief conversation about Freud and Adler already mentioned—was the only theoretical discussion I ever had with Trotsky, I vividly remember the mood.

¹⁴ In 1921 the sailors and workers of Kronstadt rose up against the Bolshevik government and demanded free elections and more rights. The mutiny was brutally suppressed by Trotsky and Tukhachevsky on orders from the central government.

In the same year Trotsky and the Bolshevik government also fought Machno, who had had considerable success in organising an anarchist social-revolutionary army in the Ukraine, which rose up against the Bolsheviks in favour of an autonomous Ukraine after Machno had spent the Civil War fighting bravely alongside the Red Army against Denikin and Wrangel.

"Go on, then—smoke!" he said as I hurriedly put the cigarette away again. "You might as well: I've caught you red-handed!" So I smoked, and we sat in a sunny corner of the patio and continued our discussion. I was having a discussion with Leo Davidovich Trotsky, the hero of the October Revolution, whose picture I had pinned up over my bed twenty years before. . . . It was so unreal, so unlikely, my arguing with him like that on equal terms. . . . But on the other hand, why not? I am not stupid, nor am I any less experienced than dozens of the young people with whom he carries on or has carried on discussions both oral and written, and he doesn't behave at all like a hero or like a professor, doesn't talk down to one at all but argues enthusiastically and amiably without ever intimidating the person he is trying to convince. Nevertheless he failed to convince me.

I saw his statement that "fathers will never consent to seeing their sons disinherited" as simply dressing up as theory that concern for the younger generation that is altogether typical of Trotsky. He is surrounded by young people, and he cares for them as if they were his own children. Rita left—she is married now—and her place was taken by Ray from America (who learnt Russian while Trotsky was still in France out of sheer enthusiasm for him and in the hope that she might one day be able to help him). Berny Wolff returned to his university course and in his place another American arrived, a thin, taciturn, proletarian youth who did not stay long but was replaced by the powerful and clearly well-fed Joe Hansen from San Francisco, who also brought a car. Jan left for America, and Ray moved into the house. . . .

So things are always changing. Mexican youths from the Trotskyist movement help with the night watch; the housekeeper couple, regarded as politically unreliable, have been replaced by a

young comrade called Rosita. They are all of them children, and to all of them Trotsky is their father. And they all agree with Ruth Eisner, who came to help with the Commission: "He may be very harsh to you—but he's the loveliest man I ever saw."

A FEW DAYS AFTER I had had my discussion with Trotsky about state capitalism, Otto went over to Coyoacan. I had not known he was going and came home from the office at three to find him not there. Shortly afterwards the phone rang. Trotsky's voice—he never gives his name when he rings up—said "Comrade Alice . . . ?" in that inimitable Russian accent!

"Comrade Otto has just left. You were perhaps wondering where he was. We've been having a big argument which went on and on. . . . Now, don't be alarmed! I'm ringing to reassure you. We argued like mad, but don't worry—we parted good friends!"

I was touched and surprised. Half an hour later Otto arrived back and told me about the discussion, which had been started by Trotsky on the subject of the Wendelin Thomas affair. Trotsky had said (approximately), "The man's an anarchist—he's up to no good." And Otto had taken him to task about the way he suspects everyone who disagrees with him. Then they had got on to their political differences of principle—Otto had to have a go at it sooner or later!—and Otto had defended his anti-Bolshevik, Trotsky his Bolshevik standpoint. They had both become flushed and excited. And, finally, Otto had shouted, "*Sie, mein Lieber Trotzki, sind selbst der allergrößte Stalinist* (You, my dear Trotsky, are the worst Stalinist of them all! . . .)"

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The Singers

We heard them leave our neighbours and draw nearer,
Easing their rough throats. One had a wicked cough.
Another could hardly have made his purpose clearer—
Give them Noel, collect, and then push off.

But on our doorstep they assumed politeness,
Whispered, fell silent, let the song begin,
And all we had lost was kindled by its brightness
Shrill as heartache, crying to come in.

John Mole

U. A. Fanthorpe

High Table

Their equable virginity has borne
No heirs. Their successors are
Fecundly and frequently married,
Or bisexual, or male. These
Are the daughters of a dynasty
Of perpetual and celibate curates,
Descended from the Venerable Bede.

For decades they manned
Their ivory turrets, named after
Three saints (one apocryphal),
A bluestocking, an English lady.
Mistresses of the negative, they elected
An apostolic succession of able girls,
High-flyers all, with plenty
Of moral bottom.

Chastely they cherished their élite,
Reserving the deepest passions
For Jane Austen, Dr Johnson, Sterne,
The safe and barren dead.
Now they endure the faltering,
Falling, failing of their favourites,
But grace their dubious unions, god-
mother their grubby offspring, read
Their liberated, unbalanced novels, still
Offer kindness and Fuller's walnut cake.

They are extinct. Their vowels,
Cool and accurate as lettuce,
Are tuned to a defunct mode.
Learning lingers purely, like the down,
Among their wrinkles, but their writ
No longer runs. These assassins,
Whose *No* slewed lives, watch learning
Leave their strict streets for new
Irresponsible freeways, their dicta
Relegated to dismissive footnotes.

Venerable falcons, cataract-hooded,
Jessed by the tight arthritis-leash,
Caged still in your vocation, stooping
Still on the disorganised dead—
But no longer your lifelong quarry,
Only Kipling, Stevenson, Scott,
The ones your book-riddled childhood
Randomly caught by heart—

Tyrants, we who can see now
How flimsy your toy palaces,
How brief your majesty, pardon
Your stiff integrity, as it nibbles
At your own white bones.

Retiring

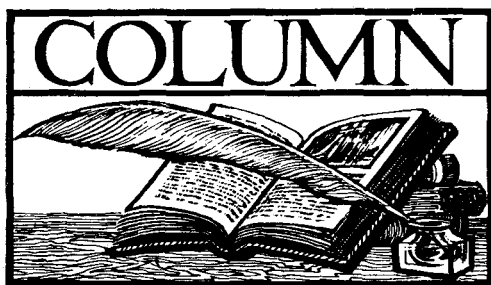
the garden gate first
fastened against dogs
and strange men
one can never be too sure
especially these days
front door back door next
locked bolted chained
the windows all secure

leave the hall light on
wasteful but it shows
to Bedfordshire
as Mother used to say
dear Mother
not a thing changed not a thing
behind those doors
what memories locked away

to bed to bed
brooding won't help at all
her bedroom
never think of it as mine
though she said Sleep here when I'm
when I'm gone
her very words
her silver hair so fine

against the pillows
well now this won't do
lock bedroom door
into my nightie quick
peep into wardrobe
I could never sell
your lovely clothes
poke under bed with stick

silly I know
but I have done that since
I was a girl
I'm safe now for the night
nothing can harm me now
snug in your bed
Mother
reach out a hand put out the light



700 millions de Chinois . . .
Et moi—et moi—et moi!

THAT PANICKY CRY, not waving but drowning in the crowd, comes from a French pop song of the 1960s. It used to be sung by Jacques Dutronc, the Gallic intellectual's Jake Thackray or Bob Dylan, a lithe, sardonic young man with a sharp and knowing eye and a lick of hair lashing his forehead. Doesn't it express exactly how we all feel, confronting mankind in the mass?

Two snapshots from memory. First, the Chinese army fighting the Tibetans in 1959. A machine-gun manned by the Dalai Lama's troops was firing at the enemy, traversing like a garden hose. But still they kept on coming, wave after wave of them, small, bunched figures in khaki uniforms and helmets, clutching bayoneted rifles, stumbling over their dead but still running forward in ragged ranks, endlessly, like lemmings or rabbits, seemingly identical and inexhaustible.

The second scene was jollier: it was London Airport on a foggy day. An aircraft was delayed; the passengers were milling about in a great untidy herd, clutching children and hand-baggage and duty-free plastic carriers. A world-weary steward addressed their air hostess. "We'll put 'em in there and give 'em a meal", he said.

You can add to the snapshots any time, on a crowded bus or train: it doesn't have to be in Tokyo, though that helps. Look at your fellow-passengers: set faces, eyes staring inwards, row upon row of anonymous people, hardly ever addressing each other, all intent on unknown private pursuits.

Or give a lecture in a large hall. If you're shy in small groups, you may lose your fear on the platform. All these people are there to hear you: a performance is expected: you put it on. And as you sweep the room with your eyes, you practised public speaker, you may seem to them to be looking at individuals—but you're probably not. Short-sighted or otherwise, you're quite likely seeing rows of cabbages or cauliflowers, which now and then break into canned laughter or applause, like a radio or television audience, a collective sound-effect. Only when you mingle, afterwards, are you suddenly exposed and at a loss.

NOW LET'S turn the tables. You and I, of course, have been looking at all these people from our aquiline crag of individual selfhood. We're both unique. Each of us has a whole world between his ears—richly stocked with learning, jokes, wisdom, affection, facts, venom, and bright ideas. What a cornucopia! And what a marvel, the human brain: to scan these printed signs on a white page and communicate with another consciousness—probably, by this time, wishing it would get to the point. All right, I will. The point—and it's so simple that I'm sure you saw it coming—is that every man jack or woman jill of "all these people", the Chinese soldiers, the airline passengers, the bus- or train-load, the captive audience, every last one of them is an individual like you or me. What we face as we look about us, you and I, is no "sea of humanity", but a huge multiplicity of private worlds.

Of course it's obvious: many truths are. But the mind boggles all the same. How can there be *room* for so many separate consciousnesses, teeming and jostling like the myriads in heaven or hell? I know there's not room in *my* head to accommodate so many millions, each full of dreams, perceptions, and memories, each encompassing a view of the universe, each as real and important as you and I are to ourselves.

So, out of mental exhaustion, I generalise—as we all do. I talk about "the Chinese", "the Third World", "the Government", "the unions", "public opinion", "the Reagan administration", "the Kremlin", "ENCOUNTER's editorial board." And no one complains. Now and then, when sports-writers solemnly announce "This is a tragedy for international tennis" or "Manchester United are over the moon", we may smile a little; but we seldom send clippings to *Private Eye* or *The New Yorker*. In the rest of the press, meanwhile, the smooth misleading sentences roll by unchecked. "Moscow reacted sharply"—"Paris said nothing"—Whitehall fumed—"Washington pulled out all the stops." When I read such words, am I alone in seeing grotesque visions?

People in groups, admittedly, can behave in strange ways. Wise old Walter Bagehot, in *The English Constitution*, claimed that "The House of Commons has more sense than anyone in it." Any teacher could no doubt say the opposite of his (or her) pupils in class. And marching in a parade, attending a football match, listening to a rock concert, or taking part in a demonstration, has a frightening, intoxicating effect: one feels caught up, levitated, massive, irresistible—but drugged, taken over, and out of control. It's a sinister parody of the "corporate loyalty" that schools, sports teams, regiments, and multinational companies try to instil: the unanimity of iron filings, twitching into position at the touch of a magnet, ready for any demagogue preaching "class warfare", "Yankee go

home", "Niggers (or Jews, or Catholics, or British troops) out."

You and I wouldn't fall for that, would we? But we do, in our own terms, every time we swallow glib abstractions. How about "union bosses", "the gnomes of Zurich", "peaceniks", "cold warriors"? Ever used such expressions? If so, for a moment, you've been an iron filing. Reifying others, we reify ourselves. And the whole purpose of reification, of course, is to make it easier to neglect, hurt, or kill people. That's why I like to keep in mind a couple of lines that W. H. Auden wrote at the end of the 1930s, but dropped from his collected works:

*There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone.*

WHAT PROMPTED this sudden sermon? You'll never guess. Siamese cats.

I didn't want to start with them, for fear of putting you off. Some people like animals, some don't; but many distrust writers who go on about them. It always used to disturb me slightly to see Raymond Chandler's photograph on the back of his Penguin thrillers—not a hard, lean, Bogart-like figure, but a placid fellow in spectacles with tortoise-shell rims, and . . . fondling a cat. Well, maybe it figured. The toughest-minded of all my schoolmasters had long ago told us to study cats if we wanted to understand women; perhaps Chandler was probing the ways of homicidal nymphomaniacs. It was all a bit beyond me. The only pets I'd ever had were two dogs, who'd both died: a wobbling little smooth-haired fox terrier, and an exhausting Dalmatian which wolfed rump steak night and morning and was rather bigger than I was at the time. Cats, I'd always thought, were for the birds—hungry for them. In our house and garden, they spelt cruelty and sin.

Yes: reification again. It all changed a few years ago when Cleopatra came to stay. She was stunningly sleek, slim, petite, and sexy, graceful, sinuous, and aloof. Not all that aloof, mind you: she had just had a miscarriage, fruit of some youthful encounter. Her owner turned up shortly afterwards. A bachelor girl in a nearby apartment, she couldn't cope with Cleopatra; so we did. Before long, we arranged suitable nuptials, and welcomed two separate litters of kittens, one born in each of the children's beds.

Could anyone fail to be touched by the sight of those small, furry, wriggling creatures, like white mice with the faces of miniature lions? I doubt it. As they grew, they at first became prettier, tottering about on collapsing legs that would have been a natural for Disney. Then, quite quickly, they were young cats: not soft, fluffy lap-muffs like other breeds, but wiry and spunky. Now, they trotted like

pumas, hunting; crouched, they bristled with alertness, waiting to spring. Yet, being brought up with children, they sheathed their claws and were careful with their needle-sharp teeth.

We ended up with four cats; the rest found homes with various friends. Three of the four were chocolate points: white-bodied, blue-eyed, with dark brown ears, face-mask, tail, legs, and feet—everyone's picture of a Siamese. The fourth was a lilac point: like the others, but grey where they were brown. After a few weeks, they were all about the same size.

It was then that I began to notice something extraordinary. I don't mean unwelcome smells or sprayings, or the cost of feeding fastidious carnivores, or even the fact that we seemed to have started a feline night-club. What was extraordinary was how unobservant our visitors were. Even with all the cats present, they couldn't tell one from another. They didn't even notice that one was pale at the points. *La nuit, tous les chats sont gris*. It seemed to be true in daylight as well.

We, of course, like the parents of twins, knew differently. We knew that Cleopatra, the mother, was a delicate, tactful animal, who would sit quietly watching her children feed before venturing to take what was left; who would come to the table at mealtimes and stretch up a hesitant paw, gently stroking someone's forearm to ask if it might be possible to beg just a scrap. She was also passionate, aching for love.

Her daughter was neurotic. She had always been nervous; but now, after a long spell with an elderly relative, she seemed to have lost touch with reality. She slunk about with her head lowered, creeping like a rat: an actual frown would appear on her brow, and her eyes shifted guiltily to and fro. Stretch out a hand to stroke her, and she'd cringe until pacified, then moan to herself rather than purring. Open the door, and she'd scoot.

The younger son was also odd. His only visible blemish was a squint: but his hypertension faintly echoed his half-sister's perpetual nerves. Thin and athletic, he'd leap about, calling incessantly in a miserable Siamese yowl. He was the one who was always out first, always up the trees first, always the farthest away when called for his evening feed. His hunger for affection was boundless: so was his propensity to spray. But pull his tail down before it happened and he'd roll over to have his belly stroked. He delighted in rough, snarling games.

The elder son was the lilac point, looking greyer and grubbier as time went by. His coat was less silky than those of the others; he was altogether burlier and more imposing. A heavy eater, he sometimes seemed more like a Sealyham than a Siamese. With his steady eyes set in their mask of fur, his calm disposition, and his air of wisdom, he was a fixed pole of stability in a rickety brood.

WHICH MADE IT all the worse when he disappeared. One evening, he just wasn't there. No amount of calling or whistling brought him back, that night or the next night, or the next, or the next. He'd last been seen sitting on the wall in front of the house, sunning himself and watching the world go by. Had he run under a car? The children hunted up and down the road, in the ditch under the hedge opposite, in other gardens and yards. There was no sign of him. They drew large portraits like WANTED posters, put one in the window, took others to local schools and hostels. Still no sign. At night, we went out calling for him. Someone saw a notice about a stray Siamese: it wasn't ours. We telephoned a radio phone-in programme, and heard his absurd pet-name broadcast; but nothing came of it. Six weeks went by.

WE THOUGHT of advertising in a local newspaper. We called to discuss it—but when they heard of our efforts to find the cat they suggested running a news item. Fine. We waited. Nothing appeared in that week's issue or—we thought—the next. Deep disappointment all round.

Then the telephone rang. Had we lost a Siamese cat? A lady had seen one in a pet shop a few miles away. Would we care to have a look?

Would we! We couldn't get there fast enough. "I believe you've got a cat for sale; we wonder if it might be ours." The woman at the counter was suspicious—but then, in a small cage at the back of the shop, we suddenly saw him, slumped in a sad doze. At the sound of his name, he jumped and clung upside down to the bars. We paid the asking

price and brought him home in triumph: thin, dirty, badly neglected, but happy as a clam.

COINCIDENCE had led to the rescue. The lady who'd telephoned was a Siamese owner from some distance away. That Saturday, her father had come out of hospital, so she'd visited him at home. The pet shop was nearby. Calling in, she'd been surprised to see the cat, a hulking male, advertised as "a female kitten", and without the usual documents. When she'd told her father, he'd pulled out the local paper: it had printed the story after all—a week late. The week before, he wouldn't have seen it. We'd overlooked it ourselves.

Lost, strayed, or stolen? We never found out, and we didn't care. All that mattered was that our cat was safe. He soon grew fat again; but his character had subtly changed. Now, when invited out of doors, he hesitates, looks up for confirmation, and then goes out—not bounding, but walking. He's cautious, and who can blame him?

Nor, I'm afraid, is the ending entirely happy. Since then, Cleopatra has died of cancer, and the family's no longer the same. The neurotic daughter seems still more jumpy, and her half-brother still more hypertense. Crying and spraying and scratching the furniture, the cats have always been something of a bother; but it's a small price to pay. What still amazes me is how much we chattering humans can learn from such fine, perceptive, and intuitive beasts. We might begin by considering that no two people on this earth are identical—not even slit-eyed Orientals in ivory fur.

M

Tinned Strawberries

A Wimbledon late sky like streaky bacon
 As the last Brit dies on Centre. Out on 3
 Wendy Turnbull and six-gun Riessen take on
 Old stoneface Tony Roche and Miss Bunge,
 Intent and pink and fair. Roche's backhand,
 Still zonking nicely, raises clouds of dust.
 A Corporation cart digests a sack and
 Roche pauses, grunts, "They've come for me at last",

Then flattens Wendy with a skidding bounce.
 How pretty tennis is, how instantly
 Forgettable. I saw Lew Hoad once
 In ten-inch quavering black and white. (Who's he?)

Riessen applauds. Roche and Miss Bunge win.
 The autograph collectors amble in.

John Whitworth

Of Inhuman Nature & Unnatural Rights

By Robin Fox

AS AN undergraduate student of anthropology and philosophy at London University in the 1950s I was faced with what seemed to be an irreconcilable conflict. The philosophers argued with compelling and urbane elegance that the naturalistic fallacy was just that: a fallacy. "*Ought*" we were told, could never be derived from "*is*." Ought, in fact, could never be derived from anything, it seemed. On the one hand the Logical Positivists were firm in their assertion that any "*ought*"-statements were emotive or prescriptive, and that was that. On the other, the Existentialists were telling us much the same thing under a different guise: that all was contingent, not to say absurd, and that one made more or less bloody-minded choices and stuck to them: this was "*commitment*."

That the one philosophy resulted in a kind of genteel north-Oxford inaction (as criticised by Ernest Gellner), and the other went off in all directions from *rive gauche* gloom to the tortuous Marxism of Sartre's *Critique* (and subsequent Communist involvement), left at least one student with a sinking feeling that, while they might not be actively corrupting youth, these philosophers were not giving it much guidance either.

This was particularly so since in anthropology and sociology we were faced with analysis, prescription, and judgment which, if the philosophers were to be believed, was neither methodologically sound nor ethically viable. In effect, it was metaphysical nonsense and emotive assertions riddled with bad faith.

To the philosophical arguments—all the heirs of David Hume—one could offer no answer, which was uncomfortable. It was as uncomfortable as one's failure to refute Berkeley's idealism: it was indeed irrefutable, but one *knew* it to be wrong. One also knew that even if prescriptions did not follow and could not follow from descriptions, they had to follow from *something*; and it was depressing to feel that they followed from nothing more than arbitrary likes, dislikes, or commitments.

PHILOSOPHY WAS equally scornful of "natural rights." There were "rules of the game" that were human inventions, but in no sense could these be construed as given by nature. That would be to derive "*ought*" from "*is*" again—which would be, as we know, impossible and even distasteful.

The prime example of the naturalistic fallacy always quoted was the sin of advancing the "*more evolved*" as the "*best*." One does not have to repeat all the elegant Oxfordian arguments here to the effect that if we equate "*more evolved*" with "*good*", then we rob the language of a word—a worse crime than robbing the Bank of England. Granted. But in anthropology we were at the same time learning how, in a very positive sense, some organisms were "*better adapted*" to specific environments than others; how some gene pools contained "*greater fitness*", all measurable; and how an organism like man was an all-round better adaptable risk than others because of its flexibility—and so on. Of course the concept of "*good*" and "*better*" here had to be defined differently from "*adapted*" or "*fitness*", or we did impoverish the language and end in tautology. At the same time, it was clear that we were, in the study of evolution, making rather profound judgments about relative merits that were not simply emotive noises or aesthetic preferences. It was "*better*" to be "*better adapted*" in the simple sense that otherwise the organism or species or population would in all likelihood vanish.

AGAIN, IN SOCIOLOGY, despite the rash of cultural relativism which would have had every culture and society as good as every other, we were constantly looking at patterns of social adaptedness, where it was clear that some cultures were less well able to survive than others. They "*functioned*" less well (in the jargon of the day). It did seem that, as long as one accepted *survival* as a criterion, one was saying something more here than just a "*hurrah*" or "*boo*."

BUT philosophy and ethics were implacable. One was simply stating preferences. There was nothing “in nature” that gave precedence. Cultures or species were simply “there.” To say that one was for whatever reason, “better” or “worse” was to express approval and dislike; that was all.

The Cultural Relativist wing of anthropology aided and abetted this attitude, and was, perhaps, a child of the same conditions that bred this particular philosophy. All cultures were indeed equal, and to rank them was simply to express prejudice. This was a counter to “ethnocentric” Western European cultures automatically ranking themselves top, on some self-appointed scale of progress, with the poor benighted savages relegated to bottom place. What the relativists never seemed to realise, however, was that their logic did not abolish ethnocentrism—it simply *extended* the privilege to *all* societies.

None of these attitudes, embroidered into schools and disciplines, left room for Absolutes, Categorical Imperatives, or Natural Rights—and none, certainly, with their heavy empirical bias in epistemology, would have had any room for “instincts” or “innate ideas.”

And it was not only the Viennese and Parisian biases that ruled out such considerations. Throughout the social sciences (and “behavioural sciences” generally) the “innate” was having a bad press. Darwin and evolution were definitely out of fashion. Evolutionary ethics was the last word in fallacious naturalism; and “evolutionism” was a term of abuse which was only rendered less severe by the overtones of gentle ridicule it had acquired.

The social philosophers seemed as much the heirs of John Stuart Mill as the philosophers of knowledge were the heirs of David Hume. They shared a thoroughgoing, robust empiricism with a scorn of innate ideas and an indulgent fondness for the *tabula rasa*. Like Mill they would advance the argument (and still do) that to flirt with the “innate” was to flirt with reaction, racism, and finally fascism.

THIS LED the sociological wing into some confusion. To be a thorough empiricist-individualist in the Utilitarian tradition was to deny the strength of Durkheimian collectivism—so necessary to the autonomy of the subject. It was also to deny such

collectivism as Marx derived from Hegel. So, while espousing a modified collectivism, they drew the line at idealism (“group minds” were out), and shunned nativism; they wanted to keep collectivism but throw out the solipsism.

The link they wished to both forge and sunder—and they did both with excruciating logical gymnastics—had bothered, for example, L. T. Hobhouse, in his critique of idealism and its dreadful consequences (*The Metaphysical Theory of the State*, 1918). It was a constant tension in sociology, although perhaps not always recognised as such; and as with all such tensions it was likely to produce pathological reactions in the patient when faced with an unpleasant stimulus. That such reactions were not always reasonable follows from the ambivalence of the subject—a well-known clinical condition.

THE STIMULUS, of course, was any doctrine of the innate. Mill had declared such doctrines to be hopelessly reactionary by their very nature: for what was innate was not changeable, and it was all too easy to point to what is and regularly has been, declare it innate, and hence unalterable—a position obviously anathema to reforming radicals. That Mill was totally wrong is obvious, but we must leave the exploration of the “unnaturalistic fallacy” for a while and look further at the pathology.

ANYTHING, THEN, that might link a doctrine of the innate with an idealistic collectivism would obviously send shivers of horror down (or up) the collective spine of empiricist-relativist-reformist social thinkers; particularly those social thinkers who wished to espouse a lukewarm collectivism while shunning the innate. To tell them that society (or “the social”) was indeed a reality *sui generis* and more than the sum of its individuals, but that this was because “society was located in the gene pool of the species” was to produce panic bordering on terror. Yet this is what that remarkable group of neo-Darwinian naturalists, the Ethologists, had the intellectual impudence to do. Instead of floating lazily around in a haze of “collective representations” or even “class consciousness”, “society” had a definite, material and wholly explicable location in patterns of evolved adaptive social behaviour characteristic of a species.¹ Marx would probably have been delighted: he and Engels surely would have had no trouble with “sociobiology”: only their *lumpen*-intellectual followers have that problem today.

The response, when the Ethologists (and their few enthusiastic hangers-on from the social sciences) dared to suggest that this may be as true for man as for lesser beings, was a hectic attempt to

¹ This leads to some confusion in the case of the human species where sociologists and philosophers tend to see the collectivity as the individual culture or society. But there is no problem. The basic repertoire of human social behaviour, given that its major component is a propensity to act on the world as reconstructed through symbolic-meaning systems, will be refracted into many *versions*. These, then, will be special cases of the species-specific repertoire. The difference between this approach and the orthodox one lies in the starting point: for the Darwinist it is the species.

deny man's animality, the method's validity, and the compassion and integrity of the scientists involved. No insult has been too much, no distortion or innuendo too extreme. When one is defending truth and goodness, any form of excommunication is permitted and even honoured.

The anthropologists, who at least pay lip-service to the importance of man's physicality and his evolution, might have been expected to cock a friendly ear in this direction. But they mostly reacted with even more incoherent indignation. For what was breached here was the distinction Claude Lévi-Strauss had taught was basic and sacred: that between Nature and Culture. Not only "savage minds", it seems, are overwhelmed when, as in the case of incest, this distinction is threatened; the even more savage mentalities of post-Tylorian anthropologists are afflicted with grisly horror. For—heirs as they were to Huxley's disastrous distinction between "cosmic" and "ethical" evolution; to Spencer's and Kroeber's between "organic" and "superorganic"; and to their own between "genetic" and "cultural"—they, like the savage, could only resort to incantation when the distinction is, however gently, declared irrelevant.

The *bête noire* here is "racism" and its sister-in-crime, "aggression." In the same way that all cultures are "the same" to proponents of this happy *Weltanschauung*, so are all races; and no one is aggressive but evil circumstances make him so. Mill would have been proud of them; but even he might have been hard put to explain how the evil circumstances came about in the first place. For which is worse?—to have creatures who are inevitably aggressive, or to have creatures who inevitably produce circumstances that inevitably produce aggression? No matter. To suggest the location of any profound behaviours in the biology of the creatures (and, particularly, their more unsavoury tendencies) was to offend against equality, against progress and human perfectibility, and so to be the potentially reactionary villain that Mill denounced in the unlikely person of Sir William Hamilton.

IT IS FOR the sociologist of knowledge to explore the paradox of "liberalism" which, at least in the United States and Western Europe, has become coterminous with "environmentalism" and so the exact counterpart of Soviet doctrinaire Pavlovianism. In each case—reaching lunatic heights with Lysenko in Russia and even B. H. Skinner in the USA—the "innate" is denied significance and the "environment" made prime mover. Behaviourism in psychology, philosophy, and the social sciences dominates both East and West; and, in the name of both "liberal democracy" and "the dictatorship of the

proletariat", the completely manipulable man is made the model of explanation and practice.

That liberal-radical democrats in capitalist America should march ideologically hand-in-hand with communist-totalitarians in the Soviet Union might appear on the surface odd. But these people have more in common with each other than with beleaguered pessimists like myself, or even with the naturally conservative majority of mankind who are less likely to be intoxicated with their own rhetoric than those whose business it is to trade outrageous ideas for dubious action in that half-world between intellect and politics glorified by the name of "theory." For the "radicals" are all dedicated to serious and cumulative change; change not only in social institutions, but (and they have at least the wit to see this) in the *very nature* of the people who support the institutions. For people must be motivated to practise the bright new institutions that either capitalist individualists or socialist collectivists wish upon them. Therefore, purveyors of either progressive-liberal or revolutionary-socialist solutions have to adhere to a doctrine of human perfectibility as a matter of principle. There is no "old Adam" in this philosophy, no original sin. There is only an infinitely perfectible human machine and a totally unoriginal virtue that will be implanted by the benign, self-appointed mentors.

One understands their antipathy to doctrines of the "innate." It is easy to follow the reasoning: the innate is what it is and is ineradicable. It is not subject to wilful change; it is not at the mercy of ideologues, and is therefore suspect. If it exists, its existence is best denied. For an extension of the argument says that even if it *does* exist, then it is dangerous to admit of its existence, since this will *encourage* reactionaries!

Why this environmentalist doctrine should be so deeply entrenched in both communist and capitalist ideologies is, therefore, easy to see. Both are equally abandoning the feudal universe and the fixed order of nature; both are concerned to remould man in accordance with the dictates of a new environment, be it a happy socialist Utopia or an affluent capitalist production line. Both wish to erect an "unnatural" order; that is, an order made according to rational decision, not an order evolved from the needs of "human nature." To this extent, then, "human nature" must be denied, at least in so far as it appears to stand in the way of rational reformist action. It is not so much that human nature is repudiated (Mill reckoned that men were incurably greedy and lazy), but that only those attributes that suit the reformist are allowed to exist in it.

One must also note here a curiosity: that this hostility to the "innate" started as a hostility to the reactionary possibilities of innate *ideas*. Thus John Locke attacked the doctrine for

“the power it gives one man or another—to make a man swallow that for an innate principle which may serve to his purpose who teacheth them.”

Thus men's *natures* could well be seen as having fixed features (Mill's greed and laziness) but this did not matter as long as their *ideas* could be changed. It was with the waning of the Enlightenment's overvaluation of ideas and reason—the rise even of Darwinism—that the hostility was extended beyond the limits of Platonic innateness (i.e. of *ideas*) to feelings, sentiments, predispositions—in short, to “instincts” broadly conceived.

This led to endless ideological confusion, and one is alternately appalled by the aggressiveness of the proponents of human peacefulness, or saddened by the intellectual confusion that afflicts the basically humane people like René Dubos who feel, with Mill, that to admit *content* to “human nature” might be to admit a Pandora's box of aggressive and malign intentions.

That emotions like altruism and aggression, for example, are not incompatible—and indeed might be necessary to each other and that they are both, in their ultimate expression, a combination of innate propensities and environmental input—is obvious to students of the evolution of behaviour, and virtually uncontroversial. It is only when these facts hit the heady realms of liberal ideology that otherwise intelligent men go haywire in their contradictory defences of the Manipulable Man who both has no nature at all and is Naturally Good at the same time.

For the record, I would rather hope that man has *some* nature, that it is indeed *innate*, and that it is aggressively concerned with the assertion of compassion, altruism, sharing, and other basic human virtues. I would rather hope for this than be stuck with a human *tabula rasa* on which any tyrants or do-gooders can write their (always conspicuously benign) messages at will. And I think man *has* such a nature, that it is intensely social, and that it gives the lie to all sanctimonious manipulators from Mill through Stalin. Given the dilemmas of our technological hubris, I think it is also our only hope—certainly more hopeful than the pious platitudes of the perfectionist liberals or the asserter prescriptions of socialism.

BUT LET ME RETURN for a moment to the calm waters of ethical theory where good and evil are elements in equations rather than problems of real life. Throughout the youthful academic period in London I was describing, an almost lone voice protested against the amorality of the philosophers and the relativism of the anthropologists: that of Morris Ginsberg. He protested that moral argu-

ment was not largely emotive but factual; that men agreed on moral ends but argued about means; that there were indeed moral universals but there was no universal agreement about the range of their application. On the basis, then, of these moral universals—universals which must surely reflect something in human nature—it was possible to erect a truly *rational* ethical discourse: essentially a discussion of means and applications. Thus, all societies agree that murder is wrong, and generosity good; they disagree about what constitutes murder, and to whom one should be generous. We do not need to look further, he suggests, than the universal ends revealed by the comparative study of morals in history, to locate a basis for a rational ethic.

Now in such a position there seemed to be hope and promise although at the time I felt it did not go far enough, and I think so still. But it did suggest some basis in fact—the revelations of the “comparative sociology of morals”—for a rational code of ethics. The problem with it was, for me, that the prescriptions woven into moral codes were not necessarily representative of the *whole* range of human activities on which a social philosophy should be based. They were primarily *negative*, and concerned with what man feared in his own nature rather than what he exalted. A true attempt to base a rational ethic on human nature, or to formulate a natural basis for a system of natural rights, had to go further.

AT THE TIME, HOWEVER, I could not see how to take it further. Clearly, in a theoretical sense, there must be a set of behaviours and their consequent social institutions that were more “natural” to man than others—and one sincerely hoped that these would be congruent with one's democratic or humanist prejudices. But how to ascertain these? Aristotle could assert that slavery was “natural”; and Verwoerd could do the same with *apartheid*, Spencer with *laissez-faire* capitalism, and Rousseau with human equality. How did we decide? And having decided, on what basis did we assert that the “natural” was better?

One thing was certain: “natural” and “instinctive” were not one and the same thing, at least not with *Homo sapiens*. Even then we could see that the old “instinctivism” would not do. It took the ethologists with their “neo-instinctivism” to teach us this, much as they are caricatured to the contrary. What we are equipped with is innate *propensities* that require environmental input for their realisation. Thus, what we need to look for is a *combination* of the innate predispositions and the range of environments compatible with them. Any prescriptions would take the form: “We are programmed to do *X* and this requires environment *Y*; if we wish to see the maturity of *X* we must

provide Y." Thus, for example, we know that there is no simple "maternal instinct" or even "mating instinct", but that an organism's capacity for a full display of maternal or sexual behaviour depends on the organism itself having had a secure maternal relationship. Thus, the organism has, as it were, an "output" of energy in the early stages that demands the "environment" of "maternal security." We know this as a result of the classical ethological "deprivation experiment"—take away the environment and the maturation of the "innate" potential is thwarted. Instinct is the organism's demand for necessary environmental input.

THE POSSIBILITY was dimly emerging, then, of a scheme whereby the innate demands and the necessary environmental stimuli could be catalogued so that we could eventually sketch the parameters within which human social arrangements had to operate *in order to be human*. Outside this, any demands on the organism—any environments created for it—would be, literally, inhuman.

If we take an animal example, it is simpler and more obvious. A rooster crows, displays, struts, pecks, copulates, fights, etc. We do not feel we have to *justify* the rooster's crowing; we need no theory of the rooster's *right* to crow; we recognise that if we prevent this we are taking away something intrinsic to being a rooster. We could say that all these things are a rooster's *needs*: things it has to do to realise fully its roosterhood. The rooster, of course, lacking consciousness and imagination, cannot, like ourselves, have *wants* in addition to its needs. (We could almost define man as the animal that wants things) The rooster cannot *want* things it does not need; humans can.

And here they get into real trouble—but that is almost another story. We have touched on it in looking at the claims of those who *want* man to be perfectible. (I only want him to be human and, God knows, that is difficult enough.) Our problem is that because of the dominance of wants—wishes, desires, aspirations, and utopias—we have lost touch with our needs: lost touch to the extent that we constantly sacrifice needs to wants like the animals in fables who have delusions of grandeur and end in disaster. This is, surely, in one sense a philosophy of caution; but (contrary to Mill's expectations) it can turn out to be functionally quite radical. For in order to restore our humanity—in order to jettison outrageous wants and return to the satisfaction of basic needs—we may have to cut through a Gordian knot of "civilised" behaviour and industrial institutions that have outstripped our capacity to handle them. To restore the basic con-

servatism of the species may require the most radical action of all.

AND HERE WE MUST NOTE another curiosity in the history of ideas. We have seen how the doctrine of "innate ideas" was hitched to "reaction" and why. But at least for the great 18th-century conservatives it was the proponents of "innateness"—of "human nature"—who were the dangerous revolutionary fellows, not the Lockean and the Humeans and other empiricists.

Take Edmund Burke's argument: we have to support the institutions of society as they stand, as we have *learned* them—since these are all we have. They are our rational bulwark against irrational (innate) passions. Burke quite consistently opposed the "Rousseauian" French revolutionaries because they chose to upset established institutions (the authentic social contract for Burke) with their claims for "human rights" based on "human nature"—hence "natural rights." Thus it was those who held the doctrines of "the innate" who were seen as the dangerous revolutionaries—as indeed we are!² Also (as Hofstadter and Burrows, among others, have pointed out) these "conservative" and "radical" labels slip about a lot in the 19th century and may or may not correlate with anyone's position on the "innate." The 19th-century "radicals" were likely to be progressive, *laissez-faire*, Darwinian individualists; while their socialist counterparts were often agrarian "conservatives", opposing change and "progress" (as conceived by the radical capitalists) as strenuously as Edmund Burke. In short, there is no *logical* connection between any doctrines of innateness (or their opposite) and any political stance: the connection is always forced.

BUT TO RETURN TO the rooster. We can see that by depriving it of certain behaviours we would prevent it from being a rooster, since these behaviours define it as much as its anatomy defines it. At some point, sufficient deprivation could mean that it ceased to function as a rooster at all, which could mean its genetic death. If we did this to all roosters, the species would become rapidly extinct. Once one is up against this sheer fact of species survival, then the nature of basic needs is obvious; and assuming that survival is accepted as a goal, the question of what to do about it is not difficult.

With man, we have not—at least not during the period since the Neolithic revolution—been faced with any such problem: *as a species*. This-or-that population may have been faced with the problem of its survival; but the species as a whole has progressively expanded, filled the earth, changed the environment, and radically transformed its own mode of existence. All this has happened, in

² Or at least *could* be. No political doctrine *follows* from either position, in fact; it is what you choose to make it.

evolutionary terms, virtually overnight. But during this 10,000-year period of unprecedented good weather and population expansion, *wants* have dominated *needs* to the extent that many behaviours and institutions, which in the pre-Neolithic were simply *needs* that the community met, are now *rights* that can be extended or withheld but, above all, have to be justified.

We never feel we have to *justify* the cock's right to crow. We can scarcely even conceive of it as a right: it is simply what a cock does to be a cock. But we have elaborately to justify the "right to work" or the "right to vote" or the "right to education." The philosophers, as we have seen, will warn us of the "naturalistic fallacy"—the fallacy of concluding that because men *need* to contribute to a group of which they are a part, *need* to be involved in its power structure (however indirectly), and *need* to be informed of and initiated into its knowledge and mysteries—because they *need* all these things this does not mean they *ought* to have them. "*Ought*" is a value judgment. We are saying only "hurrah" to work or "boo" to slavery.

But if (as in our deprivation experiment with the rooster) we progressively take away the satisfaction of these needs from the majority of men, then, whether we "*ought*" to or not, we will be faced with the consequence of extinction, or at least such considerable malfunction that we might prefer extinction. "Natural needs" may not, in this abstract scheme, imply "natural rights": but then what does? Only a creature with wants would get so confused; only a creature capable of making value judgments would exercise them so badly.

IN THE NATURAL, small, hunting communities in which we evolved, there were no ethical theorists. If there had been, we would probably not have survived. It would have been as if the roosters had spawned philosophers to tell them they had no right to crow, fight and breed as of nature, but had to justify these things. Our ancestors were too busy surviving to care much about wants or rights. They understood their needs (which included aesthetic and spiritual necessities), and they met these with their communal and individual resources. They did not "justify" hunting: they hunted to live and to survive, and it was its own justification. It was what men did. They had not much choice, any more than the rooster. With the agricultural revolution and the enormous population spurt, with the creation of a surplus and a leisure class, *wants* came to dominate *needs*, theories came to confuse practice, and any sense of the immediacy of human needs was lost. For even the peasant, on whom this fantasy structure that we call civilisation rested, was himself stripped of major aspects of his humanity as was the cultivated élite which his tedious labours supported. Even "freedom" had to be justified in

this context, which is a little like justifying the rooster's crowing. The paleolithic hunter would not have understood.

WHAT I AM AIMING AT should by now be clear: to understand the parameters which define our humanity, we must explore our evolutionary history to ask: what are our inbuilt potentials? and what is the necessary environmental input for the realisation of that humanity? Our ethic, then, would be avowedly "naturalistic." It would state that all human action, that all social policy, should operate within *human* parameters and hence avoid the *inhuman*. To do less is to risk the survival of the species. To deprive human beings of their humanity beyond a certain point is to destroy the species or, at least, seriously to distort it. To deny human beings the satisfaction of human needs is, by definition, to cut at the roots of being human.

Of course these are, stated thus, no more than the usual pious platitudes of good men everywhere. But with a difference. I want to define "human" not in terms of *wants*, not in terms of Utopian expectations or Utilitarian formulas, of theoretical possibilities or theological vistas, but in terms of what we know to be the repertoire of evolved behaviour of the species *Homo sapiens*. I am not asking that we have a world in which all men will be good, perfect, communitarian, angelic or democratic, but that we have a world in which they are *human*. This need not be a totally attractive or pleasant world. It will likely contain, as well as the angelic qualities, its share of greed, jealousy, conflict, hate, killing, and exploitation. But—and this, I recognise, is indeed a statement of faith—we can work out a human scale for all these things. Exploitation among friends is one thing; among nations or classes, it is a disaster that could end everything.

All this assumes that we can in point of fact track down the essentials of human social nature; and having done so, can act on this knowledge to produce an environment congruent with our needs. I am more sanguine on the first point than the second. The work of animal behaviourists and evolutionary geneticists—as well as structural linguists, developmental psychologists, palaeontologists, anthropologists, neurophysiologists, endocrinologists, and comparative ethnographers—promises, if treated in an evolutionary or "biosocial" framework, to yield the material we need. We can put together the information on our evolutionary past and physiological present, together with our knowledge of the range of socio-cultural experiments in which we have indulged, to establish "the parameters of humanity." Many of us are, despite the abuse of the good folk, working to this end with growing

success. But whether, having established the repertoire of human needs and possible environments, we can cut through either the morass of wants that have turned into needs (jet travel, and the like), or through the theories based on the assumption that whatever man wants to be he can be perfected into being (or through the appalling consequences of the population-technology explosion that has overtaken this rather conservative, several-million-year-old species), I do not know.

ONE THING IS CERTAIN: our evolved repertoire was *not* intended for this environment. We may well be evolved to fight, for example; but not at a distance with weapons of ultimate destruction. We are certainly evolved to be gregarious; but not in nations of 600 million, or in cities of 15 million. We are probably evolved to travel; but not around the world in eighty minutes. We are an animal which has lost forever the intimate scale of its natural evolution and lost its head in the process.

But we can at least approach the unprecedented and truly appalling conditions that we have created for ourselves with a full knowledge of what it is we are doing and are equipped to do. If we know firmly what range of social contexts is required for each and every human to realise his humanity, then we can strain in that direction—as opposed to assuming that we can create whatever kind of humans we wish in whatever image our god-like pretensions dictate. We are tampering with an old animal whose behaviour goes back to primate roots more than 70 million years old, and to mammalian and even reptilian roots that are much older still. We are unique animals, but we were formed slowly over several million years, and at least 99% of our existence—when our uniqueness was probably being moulded on the African savanna—was the existence of a small-scale hunter. This is what established our parameters. The agricultural, sedentary world is a mere 10,000 years old; and the industrial world with its even more alarming transformation is only 200 years old. Only yesterday. We are an old animal coping with a startling new world of its own creation that has got out of hand.

STILL, WE (NO MORE THAN the rooster) cannot afford the luxury of an ethical theory that denies natural rights or rational ethics. Nor can we afford a political philosophy or even a working ideology that denies content to human nature. It is too late for that; it may be too late for anything. Yet, con-

trary to what Mill and his latter-day followers maintain, to look hard at and to accept the limitations of human nature as a basis for political action, may turn out to be the least reactionary and most strenuously radical act of the 20th century.

But it will, in the non-pejorative sense of the word, be also a truly conservative act. So often we are told that man, because of his wonderful capacity for culture, is able to say “no” to his own nature (seen, one supposes, as brutish and nasty). But nature usually has the last laugh in these matters, and as an anthropologist who is constantly shaken by the evidence of man’s capacity to create truly hideous and revolting cultures, I would feel happier to think that something in human nature was always going to be able to say “no” to ignoble experiments in human culture in the name of “common humanity.” I draw some slight comfort from the evidence that that is so; that man cannot be indefinitely brainwashed by tyrants of Left or Right, and indeed even by high-minded progressives or liberals (and there are no worse tyrants than thwarted idealists), but that some of the “old Adam” resists the manipulation of the culture-mongers, even violently. In this distastefully aggressive assertion of his natural rights, lies perhaps his last best hope.

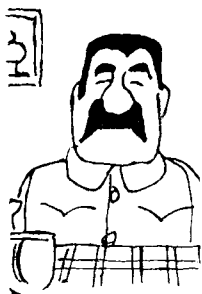
But I doubt that the philosophers, relativists, behaviourists, radicals, liberals, socialists and all the other products of human *wanting* will agree. If Jefferson said, “Always trust the people”, perhaps I am saying, “Always trust our essential human nature.” It is, after all, all we have in the end, if we will let it alone to do its natural business. It got by quite well without the theories until very very recently; and only since the theories has it gone astray.

We are now like roosters in some bizarre Aesopian tale, discussing whether crowing and pecking are in order; or, even worse, trying to find out if we really are an animal that crows and pecks, and if so, what we should do about it. Paradoxically, we might be forced to conclude that it is in our nature to create such quandaries for ourselves, so the situation is perfectly natural as it is. This smacks of the Cretan liar and his notoriously unsolvable paradox. But while it might be, in a sense, natural for us to create tragic dilemmas for ourselves, it is surely in some sense also unnatural—or at least literally inhumane—to create quandaries that negate our own nature. To be unnatural is not so bad: it is being inhumane that is the problem. “Being bad” is not so bad either; and “being good” is nowhere near as important as ethical theory would have it be. The problem is to be human.

NOTES & TOPICS

Getting Out of Yalta?

By Raymond Aron



PARIS
MANY JOURNALISTS (and even historians) have been questioning recently the myth of “the division of the world at Yalta”, recalling the Soviet promises of free elections which (according to Franklin D. Roosevelt) were supposed to be “as much above suspicion as Caesar’s wife.” Are we, then, to stop blaming Yalta, and instead to blame the violation by the Soviets of the agreements concluded at that historic place?

This new or revised version certainly comes close to a truth of the matter. In February 1945 the US President and the British Prime Minister redoubled their efforts to wring concessions out of Stalin regarding the provisional Polish government in Lublin, which was recognised by Moscow but not by London and Washington. In the end it was decided that the Lublin Committee should become the nucleus of the future Polish government, but that it was to be augmented by members of the provisional government centred in London. Winston Churchill had few illusions about the political fate in store for the East European liberated nations from the armies that came from the cold. Roosevelt was more gullible; and the Sovietisation of Poland was one of the causes of the “cold war” breach between Moscow and Washington.

It was not diplomacy but the movement of armies that determined the division of Europe. Why do we French in particular persist in laying the blame on Yalta rather than on Stalin? Stalin, the Marshal and the ideologue, had made no bones about telling Milovan Djilas: “Every army brings its ideas along with it. . . .” Since France was not represented at Yalta, it did not carry the slightest responsibility for these consequences of the War. But it is often forgotten that although in the autumn of 1944, after the liberation of France, General de Gaulle refused during his visit to Moscow to recognise the Lublin Committee, he took a step in that direction by sending a diplomatic representative (Christian Fouchet) to the Committee, while Great

Britain and the United States were still ignoring it.

In 1944–45, the words, the good intentions, and the flights of invective were stopped by the same barrier that stops them today: the Soviet armies. Those armies were already on the spot, and neither the British nor the Americans felt capable of matching strength with an ally flushed with its victory over Hitler and The Nazi Reich. Thirty-five years later, the peoples of Eastern Europe are still not resigned to the despotic and disastrously inefficient rule imposed by their old liberators. The Polish army, and still more the Polish militia are doing the dirty work, but they are only jumping to the Kremlin’s orders. Without the military strength of the USSR, the imperial, so-called socialist zone would completely collapse.

It seems to me that François Mitterrand’s slogan about *Sortir de Yalta*, “getting out of Yalta”, does a double mischief. It revives the flagging myth of Yalta, and it implies a similarity between the two parts of Europe. So France would remain “completely free” to get out of the Atlantic alliance, just as it got out of the unified command of NATO. But then one hard question persists: will the Soviets some historic day allow the Poles, the Czechs, and the Hungarians to govern themselves in their own way, and not in the Kremlin’s?

If it were simply a question of giving Moscow guarantees of security, the happy solution would be only a hand’s reach away; but for Moscow that guarantee is identified with the total power of the Party and the full backing of the Army. So the idea that Moscow wants nothing more than security convinces no one but blind men and fools. The presence of a powerful army in the middle of Europe is not there to defend the borders of the USSR; but its presence does intimidate and threaten the democracies—hence the necessity for the strict supervision of Poland, which carries the lines of communication between the bases on Soviet territory and the divisions stationed in the East German Communist Republic.

General de Gaulle preached *détente* in the hope of loosening the entrenched positions of the two blocs. But his policy produced an outcome quite contrary to what he wanted. When the need arises, tanks can repress dissidence and rebellion in the East—but it is the unity of the West that has faltered.

The French went scouting for a certain privileged status in Moscow, and the Germans embarked on their *Ostpolitik*, a copy or complement of the policy of France. Ten years later, neither diplomatic *rapprochement* nor increased trade have tamed (“Gulliverisation” used to be the high-flown phrase) the Russian giant. We are facing the same old Soviets, except that meanwhile they have built up their armaments (on sea as well as land), while Western nations have lowered their guard and feel themselves to be half-prisoners of

their customers or suppliers (and even bankrupt debtors) in the East. As for the Bolshevik leaders, they quite properly despise those Western "business-as-usual" statesmen who put economic considerations before anything else.

AFTER FIFTEEN YEARS of the policy of *détente* for which France used to claim the honour and the initiative, a confused West German Federal Republic no longer knows which of the two worlds it really belongs to, or from which it has the most to hope or to fear. Before last year's presidential elections, the close personal ties between German Chancellor Schmidt and French President Giscard tended to camouflage the dangerous German drift. François Mitterrand condemned the military coup in Poland in altogether more vigorous terms than Valéry Giscard d'Estaing or Jean-François Poncet could bring themselves to voice in response to the entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan. But he goes through the motions of taking his Communist ministers at their word—"Cabinet-solidarity"

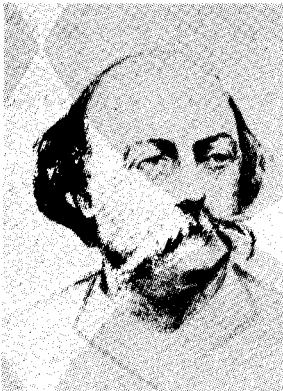
oblige—and not even hearing the Party-line words of Krasucki and Marchais.

Yesterday the President of the Republic gave the impression of believing in the "weapons of peace" and shunned the slightest action or even remark likely to offend the delicate sensibilities of the men in the Kremlin. Today the President of the Republic does not hesitate to say what he thinks about the military government that oppresses the Polish people, but he continues to govern alongside Communist Party ministers still loyal to this oppressive régime.

For both these men, Lenin's old question, the basic question, still remains: "What is to be done?" In the absence of a unified European or Atlantic accord, France simply lacks the ultimate options. Yet it is possible for France—and the West—to avoid grievous mistakes of direction. Our political objective is not *Sortir de Yalta*. The hope for peace and indeed European stability or "relaxation of tension" can only be served by setting ourselves the diplomatic aim of getting the Soviet armies out of East Europe.

Thinking about Flaubert

By François Bondy



"FOR HIM the important thing was to incorporate passionate, turbulent emotions in trivial occurrences. The most solemn and decisive truths emerge from the mouths of fools. This book demonstrates that themes are good or bad depending on how

they are presented—and the best themes are often the most ordinary. . . ."

Gustave Flaubert was as surprised as he was delighted by Baudelaire's review of *Madame Bovary* from which this quotation is taken. He had suddenly discovered someone else whose mind was Flaubertian. And yet thirteen years later in *L'Education sentimentale*, "ordinariness" was still being mistaken for lack of plot. The book repelled contemporary and later readers alike. Jules Barbey d'Aureville, a writer not entirely forgotten today,

tore both these novels to pieces, although for us they are the corner-stones on which Flaubert's reputation rests. "In our opinion there are already enough ordinary minds and commonplace things in the world without adding to them", he grumbled, and supposed that some piece of steel machinery produced in Manchester could turn out books just like M. Flaubert's. As for *Madame Bovary*, this was the sort of novel that everyone carries around with them in the baggage of life, but fortunately never writes down.

Even Léon Daudet, an extreme right-wing polemicist and often a perceptive judge of literature (his father, Alphonse Daudet, had been Flaubert's friend), must have been disturbed by the triviality since Marcel Proust had to explain to him: "In the last hundred years every literary innovation has been achieved in what contemporaries have regarded as a vulgar fashion. . . . You can condemn me as well as Flaubert. I can't imagine more noble company."

HAD NOT FLAUBERT already made fun of such arguments? "How I hate these everyday heroes with their lukewarm sentiments who one meets in

reality.” And Léon, the solicitor’s assistant, agrees with him: “It is consoling to escape from the disappointments of everyday life by thinking about more noble characters. . . .”

When Nathalie Sarraute called Flaubert “the master of us all” in an essay which distinguished between those who celebrated him as “the master of the glance” and those who praised him as the discoverer of “psychological reality”, such recognition was not so taken for granted as it was when Marcel Proust and Franz Kafka were preoccupied with Flaubert. (Kafka, in a letter to Felice, had called himself Flaubert’s inadequate pupil.)

Is it, then, psychological realism which gives Flaubert his lasting appeal? Is it the comedy of opinions, of clichés, of Ideologies—the whole spectrum of the “inauthentic” which makes Flaubert so modern (especially in *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, the novel of ideas which he left behind after his death)? *Madame Bovary* has proved the power of fiction: after all, the concept of *Bovarisme* like *Don Quixoterie* has survived. Sainte-Beuve (the critic whom Flaubert most respected) complained that the cuckolded country-doctor Charles Bovary was not portrayed as sympathetically as the reader might have wished. “The sculptor need only have kneaded the clay gently with his thumb and this would have been sufficient to make a noble and moving character out of the ordinary head. It would satisfy the reader, in fact he would almost have expected it. But the author continually resists the idea: he does not want it to happen. . . .”

THE LAST BOOK that the Austrian writer Jean Améry published before he committed suicide in 1979 was dedicated to this character, Charles Bovary; he tried to defend him against his creator, Flaubert. This reminded me of Miguel de Unamuno’s effort to rewrite the life of Don Quixote in order to protect him from Cervantes. The parallel is particularly striking because *Don Quixote* was Flaubert’s model, and Emma Bovary, like Cervantes’ hidalgo, found diversion from the triviality of her existence by reading novels, and embarked on adventures which themselves ended in triviality and disillusionment.

WHAT DID Flaubert think about the power of literature? The thirteen volumes of letters published by Conard—so far only a few volumes of the uncensored Pléiade edition (Gallimard) have appeared—contain conflicting evidence.

At one point Flaubert, like Emile Zola, wishes to arrogate to the novel the achievements and the methods of a “science” (and, not surprisingly, the pen of the doctor’s son was often compared to a scalpel by critics and caricaturists). But elsewhere

he can write: “Literature is the least mendacious of all lies”; and the contemporary findings of science become the stuff of comedy in *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, as does the whole notion of progress.

Not even Flaubert can explain the mystery of how novels create myths and images which survive their own time, when of all modes of expression the novel is the most time-bound. Although it is indispensable, the aesthetic theory which appears in his letters to his friend Louise Colet and also to his literary disciple Guy de Maupassant is by no means Flaubert’s final word on the subject.

When he wrote to Louise Colet (24 April 1852), “The further art goes, the more scientific it will become, just as science itself will become more artistic”, he said in the same letter that to him “the imagination of a single being appears just as legitimate [as] the appetite of a million people.” And we can take “imagination” to mean also the work of the writer, who does much more than record what his waking, critical, conscious mind dictates.

“In truth, I am a man in a fog. Only with great patience have I managed to divest myself of all the surplus fat that has built up over my muscles. The books I am most anxious to write are precisely the ones for which I am least equipped. In this sense then, *Bovary* has been an immense feat of strength which only I will be able to assess properly. Themes, characters, the effects I’m striving for, all these lie outside myself. I’m sure this will enable me to make great advances in the future. But at the moment I am writing this book like someone trying to play the piano with lead weights on each finger. . . .”

He was also oppressed by the idea that the novel had such a long tradition in France that it might already have exhausted itself. He was alarmed to find in Balzac themes he believed *he* had invented.

“All we can do is be clever enough to tighten the strings on our guitar, on which so many tunes have already been played, and be virtuosos, because naivety is an illusion in our epoch.”

PART OF Flaubert’s aesthetic theory is the idea of creating a novel that is a total work of art, in which every word, every sentence—“read and roared aloud countless times”—sounds exactly right. But admiring Balzac as Flaubert did, he must have known the many weaknesses a novel can have yet still carry the reader along and leave a deep impression. The novel is not a sonnet in which one bad line can ruin the whole effect. But even this is not true: Baudelaire wrote unforgettable poems which contain botched images. Through its narrative quality, its tempo, its suspense, a great novel can overcome weaknesses—more like cinema than poetry, it will never be a “perfect” work of art.

Flaubert believed in *impassibilité*, in objectivity; but, still, he is more involved, more present in his novels than his aesthetic theory would have him be, and the reader is far too caught up to worry about such inconsistencies.

Marcel Proust and then a whole procession of learned "Flaubertologists" have written reams about the way in which Flaubert's stylistic innovations (his use of tenses, the way he mixes simultaneous dialogues and acoustic backgrounds, his combination of description and conversation, of objectivity and sarcasm, of verbal clichés and deep emotions) correspond to the new content of his books—and Jean-Paul Sartre's monumental work suggests in its analyses of individual texts just how much we have lost through that last unwritten volume on *Madame Bovary*.

AGREED, THEN: Flaubert—among whose disciples we may reasonably number Heinrich Mann, Maxim Gorki, James Joyce, Henry Green, Céline, Samuel Beckett—is a master who cannot be ignored, though a large proportion of his slim body of work is now scarcely readable—today, who opens *The Temptation of St Anthony* or *Salammbô*? Yet, curiously, the novel which is most the product of its epoch, *L'Education sentimentale*, remains strikingly relevant.

LOST ILLUSIONS: this had already been the subject and the title of one of Balzac's books. But Flaubert portrays the helplessness of non-heroes who can never forge their own destinies; who suffer their own lives but never control them; victims, never masters of their fate. It is a demonstration of the psychology of the powerless and the temptation to compensate by turning to ideologies—or perhaps of the hold of ideas and clichés over such people. All this is new content in a new form. The master of post-Romantic self-irony is drawn to epic themes, and finds himself embedded in everyday triviality. More than that: in a modern political ambivalence, George Sand contended that *L'Education sentimentale* proved Flaubert's acceptance of the Revolution, and indeed he is reputed to have said as Paris burned, "This would never have happened if they had understood my *L'Education sentimentale*! . . ."

How does this remark fit in with the hermit of Croisset who confined himself to the ivory tower and art-for-art's-sake? It is one of those contradictions between committed opinion and creative method which separate Flaubert the aesthete from Flaubert the novelist, and which give the reader the impression not of the perfection of form, but rather the illusory, irresistible impression of life itself.

Novels are not read over and over again for their style alone—and Kafka kept rereading Flaubert. Flaubert insisted that the secrets of the workshop were irrelevant for the reader: only the end effect mattered, and he claimed one could express feelings all the more accurately the less one felt them oneself. His evocative powers must, then, have more to do with magic than with science. At any event, they strike us as equally effective in the early heavily-corrected drafts as in the final versions.

When he was only 30, Flaubert wrote to his friend Maxime du Camp that perhaps only after his death would his work be appreciated. Du Camp had been urging him to think of his literary career. Just how effective his novels are is best known above all to those writers for whom he has become a mentor, even a tyrant from whom they have had to free themselves. Some forerunners are difficult to equal or surpass.

Some Critical Comments

Howard's "Causes of War"

By Max Beloff



MICHAEL HOWARD'S illuminating essay (March) though written with scholarly objectivity as well as magisterial authority, cannot be detached from current controversy. He propounds, and convincingly supports, two principal theses: *first*, that wars between established states or empires never arise from accident but only from the calculation by their rulers (which may of course be wrong) that they have more to gain than to lose by recourse to war; *second*, that so-called "arms races" are the natural outcome of policies directed either to uphold the *status quo* or to alter it, and that by themselves they do not cause wars. Nor would even far-reaching agreements on the reduction or limitation of arms necessarily eliminate the risk of war—indeed the contrary may be true.

If both these propositions are accepted, the case for putting all our stress in the search for a more stable peace upon the abolition of nuclear weapons is shown to lack intellectual foundation. On the contrary, the much greater risks run by any rulers who have recourse to a war in which nuclear weapons may be used are likely to accentuate their caution.

Criticism of Professor Howard's essay might take different forms. I find it curious that even in what is clearly a highly compressed argument Professor Howard should treat the efforts to attain a decisive technological advantage by one Power or another as beginning as recently as the 19th century. I should have thought that even at sea they began much earlier—and were we not taught at school about the long-bow and the cross-bow? This point is not merely an antiquarian one. We need to be able to deal with the assertion that Hiroshima represents not just another stage in man's capacity to kill his fellows, but a "qualitative leap", the inauguration of a new era. Does Professor Howard's analysis take account of the possibility that the development of weapons is continuous, that the nuclear arms crisis may yet be met by methods of defence against it, so that our present reliance on mutually assured destruction may after all prove, in the long run, ill-founded?

THE ANSWERS to such questions depend on scientific and technological insights to which neither Professor Howard nor *a fortiori* I myself lay claim. But there are other more political issues that also deserve critical examination. Professor Howard's analysis of historical developments since 1945 leads him to the view that the division of Europe, leaving Eastern and much of Central Europe under Russian control, was accompanied by a tacit Soviet acceptance of American hegemony in the rest of the world. Since then, taking advantage of indigenous movements against this hegemony, the Russians have increasingly challenged the American position, as symbolised by their creation of an ocean-going navy. Professor Howard's historical analysis leads him to the conclusion that it is the likely American reaction to this growth of Soviet power that presents the greatest, perhaps the only real, menace of a major war. At this point, though by a very different route, Professor Howard finds himself in awkward company with CND, which also insists that the danger to peace comes from the Americans, though rejecting his view that nuclear weapons temper rather than exacerbate the danger. Given the utter lack of scruple that marks CND propaganda we may expect to see the first part of Professor Howard's argument quoted ruthlessly (though with more concern for Soviet susceptibilities) to the neglect of the second part.

MY OWN VIEW is that even in the first part of the argument, Professor Howard is too much the captive of his historical analysis and gives insufficient weight to his own important observation that in the crisis of 1914 and even 1939, as in earlier centuries, we are dealing with societies all of which were bellicose in expecting their rulers to use war or the threat of war as a conscious instrument of policy. Now things are different. The Soviet Union is a bellicose society (in so far as a people so controlled can be held to form a society) both in this sense and in the exaltation of military virtues, and in its readiness to spend its resources on providing the instruments of military power.

But the United States of America, like its allies in Europe and the Pacific, is not a bellicose society (however warlike some of its spokesmen may occasionally sound). The proof of this proposition is surely the American acceptance of defeat in Viet Nam. Other great Powers have suffered defeats; no other has succumbed subsequently to a similar orgy of self-criticism, not as to the reasons for defeat, but as to the righteousness of the war itself. It is the post-Viet Nam trauma that deprives the rulers of the United States of any certainty of popular support for measures of resistance to Soviet pressure that could be held to enhance the risk of war, and that is a major factor in the unwillingness of America's allies to sustain American policies to the full.

We thus have as the major factor of uncertainty in the world scene not an implausibly bellicose United States but a Soviet Empire relying ever more overtly on military force to maintain its sway and to extend it. But unlike hegemonial empires of the past to which Professor Howard draws our attention, the Soviet Union has the extra dimension of power that comes of its ability to exploit not merely powerful and destructive movements in the Third World, but economic interests and ideological sympathies in the very heart of the adversary alliance—that is to say: in Western Europe.

AS A POLEMICIST in this dangerous area Professor Howard seems to be somewhat too inclined to take his opponents at their own valuation, a little too ready to see CND and its leaders as no more than the latest in the long series of British moral busybodies, or, as A. J. P. Taylor (to whom he pays a revealing tribute) puts it, "trouble-makers." Of some of the rank-and-file this may indeed be true. But the weight of the World Peace Movement of which CND forms part is directed not to the impartial reduction of the burdens of nuclear armaments but to tilting the military and political balance in favour of the Soviet Union by destroying the West's will to defend itself.

If it succeeds, the Soviet Union can look forward

to bloodless victories in the future. But even if it fails its very existence may persuade the Soviet rulers to take those risks which enlightened self-interest would teach them to avoid.

Victims & Defeated

Zone of Occupation

By Reginald Steed



WORLD WAR TWO themes on television often give the impression of having been raked up and over more with a view to fostering at once residual anti-German sentiment and "Finest Hour" escapism than for their historic dramatic value. Yet the military occupation of Germany in the immediate post-War period somehow does not readily lend itself to such treatment. The cynic might almost wonder whether this could have anything to do with the astonishing fact that we have had to wait all these years for the story to be told, despite its enormous historical importance and intense human interest. No prowling Nazi "Werewolves" . . . no dastardly attacks on Allied personnel and their families . . . no reactionary uprisings heroically repressed . . . no sinister plots nipped in the bud by the superior skill of ever-vigilant M.I.5 or C.I.C. or something-or-other. . . .

Instead, the totally submissive Germans, grateful to be delivered at last from the nightmare of Hitler's hopeless war, survived somehow amid the ruins, until at long last they were allowed to take a hand in working out their own political destiny. They went on to succeed beyond everybody's wildest expectations to equal their former conquerors and mentors in all the ostensible virtues of constitutional democracy and eventually to excel them two-fold in wealth and affluence.

So far we have had every reason to be satisfied with the performance of "our" Germans, although the ratio in which Western credit should be divided is a ticklish point. Furthermore, the long-term results of our tutelage are far from all in.

Whatever the reasons for the neglect of this intriguing subject, all the more credit, at least for initiative and courage, is due to Patricia Meehan for her BBC TV production of *Zone of Occupation*, whose five weekly hour-long episodes have recently ended. The timing was also good. The "*Deutsche Frage*" has been brought to the forefront again by the spread of neutralism and pacifism in West Germany, and by the Polish saga against the background of ideological and economic decay in the whole of the Soviet empire.

Right from the start of the programme the difficulties become apparent—how to present a fair balance between Britain's glaringly obvious mistakes and her great but cinematographically far less easily projectable achievements. The policies of "Unconditional Surrender" and "De-Nazification", decided on while the War was still raging, but understandably without the advance preparation of a vast bureaucracy trained to do the impossible, imposed enormous practical burdens and many moral dilemmas on the British Army and the hastily assembled Control Commission. Whereas (to repeat the familiar grim quip) France got the wine and America the scenery, Britain got the ruins—the shattered North-Western industrial conurbations and the devastated seaports, blocked with thousands of rusting wrecks cocooned by mangled cranes.

It is easy to depict the absurdity and inhumanity, while tens of millions are starving and freezing in enforced idleness, of passing individually through the ponderous British de-Nazification mill every one of the hundreds of thousands of Germans desperately needed to get industry, transport, communications and administration working again. The old newsreel from the archives, on which inevitably a television programme is mainly dependent, was doubtless shot at the time to make that very point.

On the other hand, to present with anything like equal force the powerful arguments for unconditional surrender and a careful political screening of old Nazis, especially as seen after six years of war and Nazi horrors, would be rather more difficult and in any case intolerably time-consuming. Patricia Meehan (and the late Patrick O'Donovan, who wrote the script—a worthy swan-song) went through the routine of doing a little of this. She is entitled to argue that they did enough for intelligent and unbiased viewers. I think they should have tried harder. To a large extent they allowed themselves to be carried away by the dramatic temptations of the powerful visual material with its inevitable emphasis on the immediate humanitarian aspect. They are entitled to claim a good discount for their deliberate refusal to pander in advance to criticism from a declining rearguard of incorrigible anti-Germans.

Whatever their reasons, they were enthu-

siastically aided and abetted by the witnesses they produced from that distant era. This impressive and articulate gallery from the survivors of those who played leading parts in the Occupation inveighed movingly and often bitterly against obscurantism, obstruction, and indifference on the part of their political masters at home.

Perhaps never before have the familiar differences been so clearly shown between remote policy-makers with wider responsibilities and other preoccupations, on the one hand, and dedicated men on the spot seeking to grapple pragmatically with a host of human and other local problems, on the other. Critics of the programme have rightly suggested that a few representative people should have been found to speak up for Clement Attlee's Labour Government. Perhaps there are no survivors of suitable weight willing to take on the job. De-Nazification was handed over to the Germans after a couple of years. Of course, the de-Nazifiers had themselves first to be "de-Nazified." But much social damage, individual hardship, and political injustice could have been avoided without remotely comparable risk if it had all been done a lot sooner.

YET THE POLICY that produced by far the most bitter complaints—both from the British in Germany and from the Germans themselves—and which did the greatest damage to Occupied Germany and to British and Allied interests, was the dismantling of precious remnants of German industry.

This is not only for the obvious reason that the dismantling of industrial plant for transport to Soviet Russia as reparations—much of which was then left lying about until it became scrap—deprived Germany of desperately needed jobs, goods and exports, and delayed the whole process of reconstruction. Nor does resentment at British official action (in this and other ways, often in connivance with British industrial firms) to prevent the rebirth of "German competition" play much of a part. There were, of course, German protests at the time which would have been dangerous but for the intervention of senior British officials in Germany together with their good local public relations. The Germans accepted responsibility for the lost War and its inevitable consequences.

What was not understood, and what became part of the enduring German assessment both of the British (in whose zone most of the dismantling took place) and of the Americans (who footed most of the bill for alleviating Germany's economic plight) was that they should have shown such naive trust and suicidal simplicity in their dealings with Stalin's Russia. As the TV programme so vividly showed, the Russians, instead of fulfilling their commitments to supply food from their mainly agricultural Eastern zone, off-loaded millions of

starving refugees and expellees. Their attitude became increasingly hostile, and their objective of gaining control of the whole of Germany ever clearer. For them dismantling, whether they wanted the old Ruhr stuff or not, was also a means for creating tensions in the Western zones.

Despite all this and the fact that the taxpayers in America and in strictly-rationed Britain were providing huge sums to feed a Germany whose means of earning a livelihood were being taken away and sent behind the Iron Curtain, the dismantling of industry went on and on. It proceeded during the Berlin Blockade (1948–49) and continued, albeit at a declining rate, right up to the Korean war; and it all seemed to be proof to the Germans that the Anglo-Americans did not understand (and never would) what sort of a system Soviet Russia really was and how to deal with it. This conviction went into the German geopolitical consciousness at an early stage; and now that America has (equally naively) surrendered her nuclear superiority, it is even playing some part in the current growth of neutralism. The Attlee Government could plead the strength and persistence of "Our Russian Ally" sentiment in the British public. It could also argue that dismantling was "agreed Allied policy" and that Britain could not unilaterally break out. In view of the fact that our British zone was so preponderantly concerned, we could and should have done so. The BBC programme rightly points out that the Attlee Government, mainly preoccupied with its socialisation policies, totally failed to appreciate the historic importance of what was going on in Germany (and was largely "anti-German" anyway). The Labour Party's ingrained sense of loyalty to October 1917 and to an "historic socialist victory"—unbroken, in some wings of the Labour Party to the present day although the "Future" has so obviously not "worked"—might also be mentioned.

AN INDUSTRIAL CHAPTER in the Occupation story, that was in its way as successful as the "dismantling" lunacy was damaging, was that of the revival and reform of the pre-Nazi trade-union system. The opportunity was taken to reduce the number of unions from 160 to 18 and to create an enlightened arrangement of industrial law and relations. (The "model" was certainly not copied from the jurisdictional jig-saw puzzle of Britain's craft unions.) This became one of the main foundations, not only of Germany's prosperity and economic power but also of her social tranquillity and political stability.

Popular credit for this has always gone to the British Occupation authorities; and innumerable have been the proud but rueful references to how well we accomplished in Germany what we so

disastrously failed to do at home. *Zone of Occupation* stuck its neck out again by showing that in reality the job was done by the West German trade-union leaders themselves, the British contribution consisting mainly of giving them a fair wind and not unduly getting in the way. (Incidentally, the unwonted sense of urgency imparted to this operation by the Attlee Government was due to its eagerness to get the new German confederation established on a Social Democratic basis and to pip the revival of a Christian trade-union movement.)

There was, however, one vast and crucial area in which British policy and its implementation excelled. This was in the realm of the mind and the spirit, in the creation, after 12 traumatic years of daemonic and ubiquitous ideological indoctrination, of a climate in which democratic institutions could be created, flourish, and endure. The problems of restarting the educational system from primary schools to universities—with teachers who were presumably all more or less infected, with schoolbooks that were polluted, with children who were ragged and starving, in premises that were unheated ruins—are almost impossible to visualise now. Except, of course, courtesy of *Zone of Occupation*, from historic newsreels and interviews with British teachers who served on the Control Commission and with their first “de-Nazified”¹ German assistants and colleagues. It is almost unbelievable that this proud and moving chapter of British achievement has never been presented before.

I cannot make comparisons (although the historian, ultimately, should and must) with the American and French educational performance in their respective zones; but I suspect it could not have been better. I am quite sure, however, that in the gradual restoration of German responsibility for Broadcasting and the Press Britain led the way.

FOR HUGH CARLETON GREENE, with the War-time reputation in Germany of his BBC “German Service” behind him, his appointment to Radio Hamburg was a cinch. His bold experiments and innovations there, sold by astute diplomacy to the British authorities locally and in London, paid off handsomely (although, for a while, the generosity terrified the more cautious). The gradual

¹ To “de-Nazify” did not, of course, mean brain-washing millions of Germans into new democratic ways. (This was the short-lived, ill-conceived programme of “Re-Education.”) The programme of “de-Nazification”, something of a misnomer, consisted in legally clearing, at first, non-Nazi Germans, and then *Kleine*—nominal Nazi Party members (against whom there were no charges) of which there were millions—for responsible jobs and government service.

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decontrol of newspaper publishing was handled in a similar spirit of calculated risks. *Die Welt* (originally modelled on *The Times*) and *Der Spiegel* (which started as a satirical magazine in a climate where any critical sentiment was very suspect, especially in the form of fun at the expense of the Victor and Occupying Power) remain as monuments to what could only be classified as the British gambling spirit.

I believe that all this, together with our record in the field of education, has played an important and lasting part in sustaining German respect and admiration for what are seen as traditional British qualities.²

THE ULTIMATE QUESTION remains: did the members of the Army and Control Commission, by their general behaviour and their official and private attitude, present a worthy British image? I believe that, on the whole, they did. By contemporary "human-rights" consciousness and "anti-colonialist" standards they admittedly fell a bit short. They have been represented as "living it up" in Germany wildly above their normal station, in houses from which cold and hungry Germans had been evicted, while even at home in Britain strict rationing continued. We have been shown how they flogged their superabundance of duty-free NAAFI goodies on the German black market in exchange for such last remaining valuables as the wretched "indigenous" (formerly "natives") had been able to cling to.

I know from personal experience that much of this is only too true. Yet while some of the "casuals" in the Control Commission's hastily-assembled, rather mixed bag let the side down somewhat, thousands worked with missionary dedication in utterly depressing surroundings. On the whole those seconded from the Civil Services maintained the career standards one would expect.

Here again newsreel film footage could always be brought in from the dusty archives to support—sometimes, by strict historical standards, not very identifiably or convincingly—allegations of widespread abuses. Yet inevitably the innumerable acts of kindness and humanity, personal and official, individual and collective, mostly taking place in private, went unrecorded. All this often played as big a part as "official policy" when the Allies eventually got it right, in the democratic

success of the West German Federal Republic and its partnership with the West.

I must record that the reaction of several of the leading London newspaper reviewers was violently hostile. I can see why such BBC series as *Colditz* are so long-running and presumably popular—although, strangely enough, not among those who knew the inside of that institution. Two Fleet Street reviewers, apparently devoted to the interminable victories of British heroes over the SS and the *Gestapo* in a hundred World War II melodramas, were upset enough to write:

"How could we be so beastly to the nation that had just given the world Auschwitz, Belsen. . . . Is it all part of a national flagellation week?"

Richard Last, *Daily Telegraph*

"Now we're supposed to pity the poor Nazis! There's hardly a mention of Hitler . . . or any reference to the horror of the death camps. . . ."

James Murray, *Daily Express*

Philip Purser (*Sunday Telegraph*), speaking from his experience with 245 (Welsh) Field Company R.E. at the time, wrote that either the Control Commission was even more out of touch with the troops than they had imagined or that Patricia Meehan was wilfully aiming at *mea* culpability. He then gave a rousing list of the enthusiastic work his military unit did in the way of public works, restoring amenities, welfare, and social relations. Generally, there was a mixture of commendation and criticism and occasionally warm praise. A wide cross-section of my own friends found the programme "adult", i.e. balanced and valuable.

Most of the reviewers, including those more favourably disposed, criticised Patrick O'Donovan's eloquent script and Leo McKern's theatrical rendering of it as being grotesquely over-dramatic and even ham-Shakespearean-tragic. For my own part I thought they rose nobly to the task of providing an appropriate verbal accompaniment to the visual representation of a human drama of historic proportions.

It is only right to note a few German reactions. Fritz Wirth, London correspondent of *Die Welt*, was impressed by the programme's unflinching self-criticism, but in the end thought that the British were being a little too hard on themselves. He even recommended that it be shown in Germany as "a document of unsparing British fairness. . . ." But one German diplomat I know (and he has made a special study of British attitudes to Germany and of radio and television programmes bearing on the subject) confessed himself to be more worried about this objective film than about notorious others that were crudely "anti-German." Not that he found it unfair or unbalanced. But its criticism of the British in some respects was simply too convincing. The anti-Germans in Britain and the anti-

² Sir Hugh's achievement, the *Norddeutsche Rundfunk*, no longer exists in its original form. Over-centralised and overbureaucratised, perhaps like the BBC itself, and in accordance with post-War liberal conventions, it split into two and remains under heavy pressure from regional and private-sector forces.

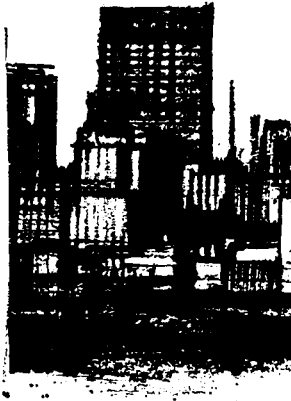
Britons in Germany would now have so much more fuel for their die-hard antipathies.

What a post-War paradox! The ultimate and unforgivable German crime had been to make the British behave un-Britishly!

Letter from America

Ideologues on the Run

By Peter Shaw



New York City

AT THE OUTSET of the recent American Writers Congress, held at the Roosevelt Hotel here, Victor Navasky, editor of the sponsoring magazine, *The Nation*, offered a contrast with the writers' congresses of the 1930s. Those gatherings, Navasky explained, "were Communist Party operations run by

front organisations. They ultimately had secret agendas." By implication, the purposes and resolutions of the latest congress were out in the open.

On the third day, however, the Committee for the Free World issued a press release pointing out that the real business of the Congress had proved to be not the airing of writers' problems, as announced, but rather "the expression of the hatred of the radical Left for America." It was not difficult to find support for this analysis in the speeches and meetings of the Congress. At times its main business appeared to be the ritual celebration of 1930s Communism. A number of figures from that era appeared and were honoured, among them Pietro Di Donato (the author of *Christ in Concrete*) and Meridel Le Sueur (a "proletarian writer" now in her eighties). Applauded whenever she conjured up her Communist past, she was respectfully attended to as she extolled the accomplishments of writers' congresses in the ideological '30s.

The auspices of such gatherings were apparently no more suspect to her audience than those of the

recent Havana Writers' Congress, whose delegate was warmly received when he read its greetings to the Roosevelt Hotel gathering. The audience alternately clapped and hissed as other speakers extolled the heroic Communist past and the embattled masses, or denounced US corporations, American imperialism, South Africa, or those who thwarted the aspirations of oppressed minorities. All the old negative shibboleths could be evoked by the ubiquitous term "fascism", or by its current synonym, "the Reagan administration."

And yet, neither old-time Communists nor greetings from Havana had been announced in advance. What drew the audience was not the hidden agenda—though it was warmly embraced when it emerged—but rather the long list of grievances set out in the "Call" to the American Writers Congress. Carried over into the printed programme and the speeches, these grievances included suffering and injustice wherever in the world they might be suspected of having appeared, alongside proposed cuts in government support for the arts, the dangers posed by conglomerate Wall Street takeovers of New York publishing companies, and attempts such as those by the "Moral Majority" to influence libraries and school boards in their choice of books. There were panel discussions of these and other issues, along with sessions on the complaints of women, blacks, homosexual men, homosexual women, Chicano-Asian-Indian-Americans, and other groups declaring themselves "special" and beleaguered.

AS THE CONGRESS progressed, it became clear that the real concerns of the participants were no better expressed by these supposed grievances than by the hidden agenda of anti-Americanism; no one, it seemed, could quite put a name to the real issues on which all appeared to be united. At the Keynote panel, Faith Sale voiced a shared confusion when she said that the purpose of the gathering at the Roosevelt was to "find out what's going on and do something about it."

A few workshop sessions, most of them late additions to the programme, took up practical issues of concern to writers: self-publication, word-processing and other new technologies, publishing house problems ("contracts, taxes, and insurance"), and the difficulties of book distribution outside Manhattan. Most of the panels, though, proved susceptible to the loaded rhetoric. "Are technocracy and specialisation destroying human values?" asked "Language As Ideology." "How does US policy support repressive régimes? What is the relationship of American writers to cultural imperialism?" asked "American Foreign Policy and Writers' Rights Abroad." In a more practical vein, a panel on nuclear war was instructed to inquire, "How can writers meaningfully confront

the Doomsday issue and the question of disarmament in their own work?"

Once again, the political agenda was all too obvious. What came as a surprise was the Congress's operative political version of reality, which consistently violated common sense and missed "what's going on."

From "conglomerates" to "minorities" to philanthropic foundations, all of which undeniably provide rich materials for trendy critique, the evils singled out were mostly things of the past. The concentration of publishing power in a few giant, conglomerate-owned firms, a trend of a few years ago, was being denounced just when things were moving in the opposite direction. Publishing companies exist on intransigently low profit margins, and conglomerates have for some time been divesting themselves of these untempting holdings wherever possible. At the same time the number of small presses has burgeoned in an unprecedented fashion. Thus, not only is the opposite of concentration taking place in publishing, but decentralisation has led to a friendly reception for unconventional writing of every conceivable kind. Books by blacks, homosexuals, feminists, and those holding dissident views, far from being "suppressed", have probably never had a better chance of publication.

Even if one sets aside the output of the new small presses, the largest companies have hardly been unresponsive to books by and about these same groups. It may be that the few books in praise of heterosexuality have competed successfully with the many in praise of homosexuality; but, if so, this has been a function of free market-place decisions by readers, not of manipulations by editors and publishers. As for the other minorities, nothing could have convinced one more firmly that the opposite of "exclusion" is presently the rule than their own huffing and puffing. Repeatedly discussions of exclusionary practices (said to represent "virtual censorship") were peppered with mentions of books written by the panellists and their good friends, most of which had been or were about to be published by major houses.

The list of impassioned persuasions diametrically opposed to easily observable reality is worth extending, not so much to refute them as to pose the puzzle of how and why they came into being. How can one assert that "anti-nuclear books" are being suppressed when they have become a drug on the market? Who could believe that foundations are biased in favour of projects that support "the liberal corporate state" when their liberal-progressive bias toward attacks on that state has been amply documented? The Writers' Congress listed financial support from four US governmental agencies, the National Endowment for the Arts among them, and from numerous corporate and private foundations, including the Mobil Foundation.

As for the dark hand of the CIA, it was being treated as a ubiquitous, sinister presence at a time when its general effectiveness, overt and covert, was at its nadir. Television was offered as an example of "exclusionary oligopoly" when one can hardly open a newspaper or magazine without reading about the decentralising growth of independent "Cable TV" systems and the steady loss of audience to these by the major American networks. Finally, in a kind of summation of fantasies, the writer Toni Morrison was interrupted by enthusiastic applause in her keynote speech when she described writers as the mere "toys" of society—tolerated by king-like corporate oligarchs, but summarily dismissed whenever they had the temerity to express their own convictions.

HERE AND THERE the bubble was burst by the sharp points of statistics and informed testimony. Robie Macauley pointed out that publishers earn only about 6% profit—whatever the inequities of "the system", they have hardly been growing rich by exploiting writers. At the panel on "Writers and the Academy", comments from the floor included the information that the two "best" books on El Salvador—those with a Left interpretation—had been published by those same University Presses that were being described as "lackeys of the corporate state." On the matter of discrimination against academic radicals, one young man noted the apparently large number of successful academic radicals (many of them present in that conference room), and asked how their younger followers might emulate them.

These intrusions of reality brought no ripple of recognition or revision. But at one panel, "Working-Class Writing", the combination of subject and panellists brought certain contradictions out into the open. Meridel Le Sueur predicted the imminent organisation and self-assertion of "the People." Pietro Di Donato then excoriated Le Sueur's "People" for abandoning working-class values. And finally Avery Corman (author of *The Old Neighborhood*, and of the film *Kramer vs. Kramer*) recalled that when he was growing up in the 1940s everyone in his working-class neighbourhood was striving to "make it" into the middle class rather than to develop a proletarian consciousness. Many of his acquaintance had succeeded; and he felt that this was perhaps not such a bad thing.

None of this produced a confrontation, let alone intellectual clarification of the issues. From the left flank Di Donato—a bitter, self-absorbed, profane, and rather apocalyptic figure right out of the sacrosanct radical past—went on to call the working class anti-Semitic and even "fascist." Its members had fought in the imperialist war in Viet Nam,

and had just voted to elect Ronald Reagan who, good actor or not, had been “a fascist for thirty to forty years.” From the opposite direction Avery Corman, speaking for the prosperous professional class so amply represented at the Roosevelt, was suggesting that “the working class” existed only in the nostalgia of sentimental ideologues.

The audience finally ignited at Corman’s assertion that people of his sort were responsible for the liberal gains of the last decade, while the rejection of the women’s movement reflected badly on the “toiling masses.” Needless to say, in the course of outraged denials, no one went so far as to suggest that the real opinions of actual workers might deserve examination and even discussion. Tillie Olsen rambled along in an argument to the effect that feminism *had* captured the working class. Here the middle class rose up to “overthrow the chair”, held by Alden Whitman, so that Tillie Olsen might go on about her deprived, proletarian past, and her valiant championing of the noble feminist cause. This proved overwhelming for many in the audience. There was an ovation; I was moved to note that she broke into tears and at least two young women followed her example. One of the weeping young women brought herself under control, detailed her travails as a shipyard worker, in the “This-is-my-life” autobiographical mode that prevailed at the Congress, and then replied to Avery Corman by blurting out: “I was never a rich Jew.” Here was the stuff of high ideological drama! Were the progressive forces of the Left free of racist prejudice? Could the working class, the Congress’s Heroes, be less than perfect? Whatever happened to class virtue? It was a trying time for those academic intellectuals who hold tenured professorships in the humanities, and for self-styled dissident writers specialising in the rejection of “middle-class values”, who were recipients of official grants for writing denunciations of the government.

ON THE LAST DAY Helen Yglesias, sometime literary editor of *The Nation*, unwittingly summed up the foggy intellectual drift of the Congress. “There really is something wrong out there”, she declared, “and it’s driving all of us crazy.”

What was that undefinable “something”? Ob-

viously it had to do with the embattled position of the political Left and the general state of “forward-looking” American letters. The unspeakable truth was that both of these cultural phenomena had been in precipitous decline for more than a decade. There was talk here of the lack of “intellectual excitement” on the contemporary Left, and the mounting sadness that writers were “no longer central to the cultural life of the nation.”

A measure of disenchantment had seeped in during the 1970s, as the “failure of socialism” was, yet again, finally and unequivocally revealed, and by 1981 it was no longer possible to deny the identity between fully socialised régimes and the miseries of political repression and economic failure. Also in the 1970s it became increasingly difficult to celebrate “contemporary literature in the old way”. Leading writers turned from social-critical fiction toward sober fact; many even abandoned “modernism.” The body of literary criticism seemed to be suspending critical value-judgment.

So long as the true roots of the Congress’s malaise remained hidden, the “fascism” of Reagan’s America served a convenient function. Thanks to Ronald Reagan, the Left could continue to regard itself as being under relentless political and artistic attack. It was both a radical minority and the conscience of an ideological majority. Its writers and academics—who in the admitted absence of the American working class and the labour movement *were* the Left for all practical purposes—were the noble remnant. As one panellist after another strode confidently before the microphones at the Roosevelt Hotel, they studiously listed their grants, professorships, and publications as credentials. At least here they were able to satisfy themselves and their listeners that all would be well in the literary life of the nation were it not for the Reagan policy towards El Salvador, the challenge of the “Moral Majority”, the book-distribution policies of Wall Street-owned publishers, and the existence of South Africa.

One hesitates to look more closely at the unquiet desperation, for what was being represented as assault from without appeared all too sharply as decay from within. The ceaseless, self-pitying complaints proved to be genuine after all. Something was indeed “wrong out there”, and was visibly “driving all of them crazy.”

BOOKS & WRITERS

The Theatre of Mind

Samuel Beckett & the Noh—By YASUNARI TAKAHASHI

WHEN *Waiting for Godot* had its première in Paris in 1953, it is reported that some members of the audience were overheard making such remarks as: “How boring!” “Nothing happens!” “Is this a play?” “This is no play”, etc. It was indeed not a play in the accepted sense of the word but something else for which no suitable word was to be found in the existing vocabulary of Western theatre. Some people like Jean Anouilh, fascinated and exasperated, tried to describe their impressions thus: “This is Pascal’s *Pensées* played by the Fratellini brothers [the famous circus clowns].” Others had to make recourse to new labels such as “anti-theatre”, “anti-play”, or “the theatre of the absurd.”

It happens that I remember often overhearing exactly the same sort of complaints at the Noh theatres in Tokyo: “How boring!” “Nothing happens!” “Is this a play?” “This is no play.” To be fair, these remarks were made not necessarily by the more honest foreigners among the audience but by the hyper-modernised Japanese as well.

It is no play; certainly, it is a Noh play—this frivolous but inevitable play on words reminds me of a standing joke about the Kabuki and Noh troupes when they made their first joint tour of the United States. They were performing at the same theatre in Broadway alternately, and, wondering why there were such small audiences at the Noh performances, they found that on the poster outside the ticket-office there was written in large letters, “No play this evening.”

If a Noh play is no play, or if the Noh drama is not a drama, then what is it? The most succinct definition of the Noh drama in contradistinction to the Western concept of drama is given by Paul Claudel, the French playwright who also was the French Ambassador to Japan in the 1920s: “*Le drame, c'est quelque chose qui arrive; le Nô, c'est quelqu'un qui arrive.*” (In drama, something happens; in Noh, someone arrives.) I would tentatively paraphrase this dictum of Claudel in the following way. In the Western drama, the driving force is the conflict between man and gods or destiny, between man and man, between man and his environment, etc., and the theatre is a space in

which we witness some action taking place out of this conflict and developing according to the more or less complex laws of cause and effect towards the final dénouement. On the other hand, a Noh play starts at the point where everything has already happened, and what we see on the stage is not the action in its process of happening but the arrival of someone, actually a ghost out of the past, who relates and re-enacts things that happened a long time ago.

By far the best way, in my opinion, to illustrate this distinction between the Western drama and Noh is to introduce what was done, back in 1919, by Arthur Waley, the great Orientalist and the superb translator of Noh plays and also of *The Tale of Genji*. Waley imagines how the theme of John Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi* would be treated by a Noh playwright. It would certainly be in the most typical form of the entire Noh repertoire, called *Mugen Noh* (a Dream Noh), which was brought to perfection by Zeami, the great playwright, director, actor, and theoretician, in the 14th century. (I must ask you here to understand that whenever I use the word Noh here, I mean this particular type of Noh, *Mugen Noh*.)

According to Waley’s adaptation, the first character to come on to the stage is the Pilgrim, who in Webster’s original play is merely a very minor character; but in a Noh play his role, which is called Waki, a secondary character, is far from being negligible. The Pilgrim names himself thus: “I am a pilgrim from Rome. I have visited all the other shrines of Italy, but have never been to Loretto. I will journey once to the shrine of Loretto.” The journey is done by a mere singing of “the Song of Travel” and a few steps about the centre of the stage. While he is kneeling at the shrine, Shite (the protagonist) comes on to the stage. She is a young woman, apparently a native of this village. She engages the Pilgrim in conversation, and he asks her if it was not at this shrine that the Duchess of Malfi took refuge from her mad brothers. The young woman tells the story of the Duchess’s flight, adding certain intimate touches which force the priest to ask abruptly, “Who is it that is speaking to me?” And the woman answers, “I am the soul of

the Duke Ferdinand's sister, she that was once called Duchess of Malfi. Love still ties my soul to the earth. Pray for me, oh, pray for my release!" And she exits.

HERE CLOSES the first part of the play. The second part begins when the woman reappears in the costume of the Duchess of Malfi, and she, the veritable ghost of the Duchess, narrates and mimes the agonies of her final hours, accompanied by the chorus which is seated on one side of the stage. Finally, she acts the scene of her own execution, sinking her head and folding her hands, saying, "Come, violent death, / Serve for mandragora to make me sleep! / Go tell my brothers, when I am laid out, / They then may feed in quiet." (These words are direct quotations from Webster's text.) The chorus, taking up the word "quiet", chants a phrase from the Buddhist scripture, "In the Three Worlds there is no quietness or rest."

But the Pilgrim's prayers have been answered. Her soul has broken its bond, is free to depart. The ghost recedes from the stage down the *Hashigakari* (the bridge, a corridor connecting the stage and the backstage called the mirror-room), and vanishes from sight.

Waley's excellent attempt to reconstruct Webster's play into a typical form of Noh play would seem to require a couple of supplementary remarks which might help to set a perspective convenient for comparison of the Noh and Samuel Beckett's plays.

The origin of the Noh drama is closely connected with the ancient Japanese belief in the unappeased spirit of the dead. The unfulfilled passion of love, grief, or hatred endows the dead with a sort of hateful immortality. And the ghosts of the dead are compelled from time to time to come out of the Buddhist purgatory in corporeal forms which were theirs in their life-time and visit the world of the living in order to alleviate their torments by telling someone the stories of their agonies, somewhat in the manner of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner. Or it may remind you of the ghost of Hamlet's father. But perhaps the best counterpart to this aspect of the Noh drama to be found in Western literature is Dante's *Divine Comedy*, especially *Purgatory*, where, instead of the ghosts visiting the real world, Dante visits the undying ghosts who narrate to him the still vivid moments of their lives and deaths and sometimes ask for his prayers for their sake, because in the Catholic faith as in the Buddhist prayer by the living serves to alleviate or shorten the period of the torments of the dead. If Waley's adaptation of *The Duchess of Malfi* sounds appealing or acceptable to Western people, it might be pointing to the universality of the idea. And the

notion of the Noh drama as a theatrical transformation of the ritual of exorcism of the demonic power of the dead should not be so strange or arcane as it might seem.

This belief in the presence of the dead can be subsumed in another, still more ancient belief in what some Japanese anthropologists call *marebito*, which literally means a "guest" but designates a special kind of guest. To put it simply, this special guest was a sacred being who, coming periodically out of the "Land of Eternal Darkness", visited the village, and was entertained by the villagers with a solemn and sumptuous ritual in the hope that it would turn itself into a benevolent spirit and sanctify the village with its holy blessing. Parenthetically, I might call your attention to Aeschylus's *Oresteia*, especially *The Eumenides*, which celebrates the metamorphosis of the Erinyes (the Furies) into the Eumenides (the Kindly Ones) whom the Athenians hoped would thenceforth bless the city of Athens. The ritual centred upon the preparation of a sacred space, a kind of purified "void", so that this empty space might be filled by the arrival of a strange guest, a sacred spirit in human form, a God incarnate. The preparation always took a form of primitive drama with music and dance. As an artistic sublimation of this old ritual, the Noh drama could be regarded as a form of "holy theatre" (in Peter Brook's words) whose ultimate aim lies in preparing for an epiphany of God as a stranger and making it possible for "someone" to "arrive", as Claudel put it.

ANOTHER POINT to be stressed is the importance of Waki, the secondary character, and of the chorus. Although the Noh drama is overwhelmingly dominated by the presence of Shité (protagonist), yet Waki is also indispensable, albeit in an indirect way. From the structural point of view, it is through his shamanic power, or (if you prefer a chemical metaphor) it is through his catalytic function, that the supernatural Shité is brought forth on the stage, taking flesh first as a village woman, then in her true identity as a ghost. Or it may be truer to say that the central action of a Noh play, i.e. the "coming" of Shité in the second part, really takes place in a dream of Waki, which is indeed the reason why the play is called a "Dream Noh." This is also a reminder that Shité in the second part exists in a totally different spatio-temporal dimension from Waki, in spite of the fact that Waki is apparently watching and listening to Shité's dance and songs, so that there is no possibility of dialogue taking place between them.

From the psychological point of view, too, Waki is crucially important, because it is with him that the audience identifies itself. In an atmosphere of great tension, the audience, together with Waki,

waits for the apparition, tastes that thrill of epiphanic moment which you must see to believe, and then watches the terrifying and fascinating stranger from the other world dance out her undying fire of passion, finally to experience a catharsis of fear and pity, be it Aristotelian or not.

But it is not simply identification that matters here, for the audience sees both Shité and Waki at the same time, which fact distances the audience in a sense from either of them, thus enabling it to experience the coexistence of two different dimensions.

This dual consciousness of the audience, not unlike Brecht's alienation effect, is related also to the way the chorus functions, which you may find rather curious and irrational. The chorus, by definition, should be a pure objective commentator, or at the most a mouthpiece for the feelings of the people of the community, as in Greek tragedy or in Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*. In Noh, it is much more than that. The chorus of course narrates the story objectively, but it also sometimes speaks in unison with Shité, sometimes speaks for Shité, using the first person singular, while she dances silently. Incidentally, this goes concomitantly with another irrational convention. Shité on her part can shift abruptly in her speech from the first person pronoun to the third person, as if she were describing her own action from the point of view of the chorus. This convention, however, may not strike the Western audience of post-realistic drama as too curious. It has been used very effectively in the production of *Nicholas Nickleby* by the Royal Shakespeare Company in London and New York.

ARMED WITH THIS MUCH knowledge of the Noh drama, let us now confront our subject. We may be fools rushing in where angels fear to tread, for unlike Yeats or Claudel or Brecht, Beckett is on his own evidence uninfluenced by this theatre form of the Far East. I asked when I met him in Paris last summer if he had been influenced by Noh, and he said, "Not consciously", which is a very tantalising answer, just like the answer he gave to Deidre Bair, who asked his permission to work on his biography: he said to her, "I will neither help you nor hinder you." In my case, however, I shall simply take his words as they are and proceed on the hypothesis that the absence of conscious influence should be all the more interesting if it could be shown that the two theatre forms, with a vast temporal and spatial distance between them, do share some fundamental characteristics. We could perhaps take courage from the fact that Yeats's play, *Purgatory*, ostensibly uninfluenced by Noh, is the finest fruit of the lessons he learnt from it, definitely a better one than the four earlier plays in which he consciously tried to steal from the

wealth of the Japanese theatre. Incidentally, Beckett confirmed to me that he had a great admiration for Yeats's later poetry and plays.

We begin with the beginning, his first published and produced play, *Waiting for Godot*. I have already mentioned the complaints overheard at the first night of *Godot*. But this reaction on the part of the audience is only an echo of a feeling expressed by Estragon himself, who, bored to death with waiting in vain, exclaims, "Nothing happens, nobody comes." Apart from the effect of forestalling the audience's bored response, however, this speech of Estragon has an extraordinary reverberation for those who know, as we do, Claudel's dictum, "In drama something happens; in Noh, someone comes." Is Estragon, or Beckett, alluding to Claudel's aphorism? It is rather unlikely, but if so, this is a quotation in a curiously reversed form. And if this speech is to be taken for a very apt summary of the whole play, it will follow that *Waiting for Godot* is a negation of both the Western notion of drama and the essential dramaturgy of Noh as defined by Claudel. It would mean that the play is not only anti-theatre but also anti-Noh.

You may object to me (or to Estragon) that something does happen, indeed many things happen, on this place dubiously called the "Board" (the Stage)—business with hats and shoes, gestural mimics, dances, games, quarrels, even an attempt at suicide. They are, however, none of them "real" dramatic actions in the Aristotelian sense: they are all "pseudo-actions" performed simply to kill time, all "non-events" intended for no logically climactic moment. In a strictly Aristotelian sense, nothing happens. Similarly, it may not be true that nobody comes, if you count Pozzo or Lucky or the boy. But obviously they are not that "someone" who, by "coming", is supposed to make the Noh drama what it is, any more than they are the awaited Godot himself.

LET US TAKE a closer look at some structural peculiarities of *Godot* which might be counter-illuminated by what we know about Noh. Transposed into the context of Noh, Didi (Vladimir) and Gogo (Estragon) are not so much Shité and his companion as Waki and his companion who wait for the real Shité to arrive. Of course they are far from resembling the serious-looking itinerant priest of Noh: they are much more like the comedians of Kyogen, a kind of farce usually performed as an interlude between the two pieces of Noh plays. As for Pozzo and Lucky, their arrival in the first act causes Didi and Gogo (and the audience) to entertain a momentary illusion that this might be the awaited coming of Shité with his companion, which, however, is quickly proved to be false. And although Pozzo's reappearance in the second act, pitifully transformed into a helpless blind man

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accompanied by a dumb servant, thereby revealing his true identity, does in a sense remind us of Shité in the second part of *Noh*, yet he is after all a "pseudo-Shité", a miserable caricature of the true Shité who supposedly ought to come in the person of Godot.

Thus Didi and Gogo have to go on waiting for a true epiphany, and Godot's failure or refusal to come must leave the space, the stage, empty and unblessed with the visit of a ghostly guest. No transfiguration of reality, no communion of the sacred and the profane, takes place. No catharsis is allowed to the audience. It may indeed be doubted if the coming of Godot, should it take place, would be of any help to Didi and Gogo, for the fact that his name (Godot) itself sounds like a parody of God might imply that the best they could hope for would be an endless sequence of "pseudo-epiphanies" of "pseudo-Gods."

THE ONLY PERMANENT stage-set in *Noh* is a luxuriously green-leaved pine tree, painted on the wooden wall at the back of the stage. If I may indulge here in what might look like word-play, the Japanese for "pine" is *matsu*; and the Japanese for "wait" is also *matsu* (the same pronunciation though different characters: by coincidence, by the way, the English word "pine" also connotes the act of waiting, as in Shelley's "We look before and after and pine for what is not"). And it has been shown by researches in folklore that the pine tree was always associated in the minds of the ancient Japanese with the magical rite of calling forth a holy spirit. The pine was a symbolic tree on which people waited for God to descend. To strengthen this theory further, the Japanese word for "vigil" and "festival" is *matsuri*, which has also an etymological connection with *matsu* (waiting). And of course a vigil or festival is a rite of calling forth a God as well as celebrating his epiphany.

Now the only prop on the stage of *Waiting for Godot* is a bare tree. It would certainly stir multiple associations in the minds of a Western audience, from the cross of Jesus Christ and the Igdrasil of Scandinavian mythology to the blasted tree in Yeats's play, *Purgatory*. But the associations would be enriched further by taking the tree for a parody of the pine tree of the *Noh* stage. In *Waiting for Godot*, no god descends on it, despite all the excruciatingly serio-comic gestures of waiting on the part of Didi and Gogo; consequently we as well as they are denied a festive experience, which should be at the root of any drama, East or West.

One almost wonders if that was not precisely how Beckett in *Waiting for Godot* envisioned the state of modern man as well as that of the modern Western theatre. The perfect fusion of the vision and the dramatic structure to express it is what

makes the play a masterpiece, and my point is that both the vision and the structure of *Godot* might be made poignantly conspicuous by considering the play a kind of "anti-*Noh*."

Another aspect in which *Godot* sharply contrasts itself with *Noh* is in its attitude towards the past. Shité in *Noh* is an apparition from the past, often from a very distant past; she is dead but the past is not. The presence of Shité, which is, as it were, the time past made flesh and voice, is even more potently there than that of any human being alive. On the contrary, everything in *Godot* is here and now (though "here and now" in this play is admittedly ambiguous enough in comparison with the unitary time-space scheme of a realistic play). The "dark backward and abysm of time" the memory of which might torment the characters is deliberately dismissed; there is an almost hysterical revulsion against the "remembrance of things past" whenever the characters are faced with questions concerning the past. Didi's reaction against Gogo's "dream" is also very significant. All this, of course, may be a paradoxical testimony to their obsession with time, and it is true that there is one moving scene where Didi and Gogo listen to the voices of the dead whispering in the air. But there is no such encounter of the living and the dead, no such coexistence of the time present and the time past, as we find in *Noh*.

After *Godot*, it seems as if Beckett keeps approaching with ever-increasing seriousness an austere theatre which, both in its skeletal bareness of structure and in its thematic obsession with the coming of someone out of the past and memory, reveals a special affinity with *Noh*. The second play, *Endgame*, is a play concerned with eschatology, the imminent end of a game which is Western civilisation itself. But in spite of that (or perhaps exactly because of that), we witness the characters being haunted by poisonous memories. We even see the time past literally present in Hamm's parents, who are apparently still alive in dustbins, obviously a parody of graves. And it is interesting to note that the dialogue between Hamm and his parents does not take place except through Clove as intermediary. However, this play is probably too fiercely dramatic in content to make us feel its latent affinities with *Noh*. We must wait till *Krapp's Last Tape* to come across a really fitting example.

THE PLAY presents the old Krapp on stage as Shité (protagonist), but in this seeming monodrama, he also plays the role of Waki—he does so at least while he is straining his ears to his own voices taped in his younger days. And it is these voices that take over the role of Shité during these moments. Of course, there is a world of difference between, on the one hand, the disembodied voices

which, coming out of a modern machine, and with mechanical repetition, narrate the stories of past passions ("pseudo-passions" at that), and on the other hand the overwhelming physical presence of Shité in Noh, who both narrates and beautifully dances out her old but still-too-real passion. It is also difficult to identify the half-crazy forgetful old man listening to his own voice with the sane and intelligent priest in Noh who watches and listens to the "other" character. It goes without saying that Krapp is utterly incapable of exorcising or laying the unquiet ghost which is his former self. Nevertheless, we find in *Krapp* the first unmistakable emergence in Beckett's *oeuvre* of an essentially Noh-like structure—or more strictly speaking, a structure resembling the second part of Noh, namely, the voice as Shité arriving out of an alien time-space dimension versus the character as Waki listening to that voice, without any possibility of dialogue between them.

THE PUREST EXAMPLE of this structural principle is the play *Not I*. Here we have a Shité reduced to a bare outline of a "Mouth" of a woman, looming out of the dark and recounting what she pretends to be another woman's life, though it

is only too clear that it is her own life that she is narrating, and that her babbling is an inadequate but compulsive attempt at re-living her earthly life. And we have a typical Waki, whom Beckett names "Auditor", vaguely priest-like with his hooded figure, facing the "Mouth" diagonally across the stage (as in Noh), listening intently like a confessor to her voice, and apparently trying ineffectually to absolve the tormented soul.

We must remember that *Not I* is exceptional in its clear-cut separation of the two roles, which closely resembles Noh. All the other plays by Beckett show a more ambiguous "doubling" of Shité and Waki, or (to put it the other way round) a "splitting" of ego and *alter ego*. The old man Krapp cannot after all be called Waki pure and simple, because both the voice and the life it narrates are his own.

Or take *Eh Joe*, a television play, which I think is a new variation of Beckettian Noh play utilising the mechanism of a medium which is even more modern than the tape-recorder. Joe remains silent throughout. It would seem that he gets relegated from the position of the ostensible Shité to that of Waki when the Beckettian Shité makes her appearance as a female voice. The woman used to be one of Joe's mistresses, and she reminds him of past episodes which he has apparently forgotten

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about. Her narration lingers with a peculiar precision upon the suicide of a girl who was forsaken by him or who despaired of any meaningful relationship with him. There is a slight chance that the voice might be actually that of the same girl, in which case we, the audience, together with Joe, are meant to see in our mind's eye the scene of suicide as narrated and enacted by the girl as Shité, just as we are meant to do in the case of the Duchess of Malfi re-enacting her own execution in Waley's adaptation.

But again, Joe cannot be a pure Waki, because it is suggested, though ambiguously, by the voice itself that it comes from Joe's own mind (the voice says to Joe, "You know that penny-farthing hell you call your mind. . . . That's where you think this is coming from, don't you?"). I might explain in passing that in Noh, Shité makes her appearance from the *kagami-no-ma* (the mirror room), which is not simply a dressing room (though it is there that Shité dons her mask); it rather symbolises an "other world", a purgatory, the depths of Jungian collective unconscious, if you like. Now, Joe's "mind" does look as if it were a Beckettian version of *kagami-no-ma*, but one must admit that this "penny-farthing hell" is, if anything, more Freudian and personal than it is Jungian and archetypal. Anyhow, the fact that the voice, though it is not his own, comes from his own mind and recounts his own story should deter us from claiming him to be the same character as Waki in Noh.

Rather it is our impression that Joe, with his face close-up on the TV screen and frozen in a tense expression, resembles what in the Noh drama is known as *hita-men* (Shité in a maskless role); and the muteness with which Joe listens to the voice could be compared to that particular style of acting in Noh called *i-guse*, whereby Shité sits utterly still and dumb while the chorus chants long passages which are sometimes descriptions of her misfortune and sometimes her interior monologues.

So I would suggest, at the risk of making my argument rather too complicated, that what we find in *Eh Joe* is the tripartite structure of Noh (Shité, Waki and Chorus) telescoped into a double structure. Joe listening to the woman's voice is Waki listening to Shité but he is also Shité listening to the chorus. Conversely, the woman's voice is Shité emerging out of "elsewhere" into the presence of Waki at the same time that it is the chorus narrating to Shité his own life story.

It will not be difficult to detect a similar device, not only in earlier plays like *Krapp*, but also in the most recent plays. *That Time* is a new amalgam of *Krapp* and *Eh Joe*, for here is an old man sitting in the dark, just listening to his own voices from three different periods of his life. He is a helpless passive Waki assaulted by the aggressive ghostly voices coming from no one knows where; but he is also Shité caught in his anguished efforts to come to

terms with his own past as narrated by those voices.

ANOTHER RECENT PLAY, *Rockaby*, likewise splits the old heroine into her physical presence in a rocking-chair and her recorded voice. What is new about this play (for Beckett never repeats himself) is that the voice uses a third person pronoun referring to the woman: ". . . till in the end/ the day came/ in the end came/ close of a long day/ when she said/ to herself/ whom else/ time she stopped." This produces an effect quite different from the first person used in *Krapp*, the second person in *Eh Joe* and *That Time*, or even from the third person in *Not I*. One of the most curious moments in the play is when the woman joins the voice, speaking in unison: "time she stopped." You will recall *Krapp* joining in the laughter of the taped voice, but probably the closest parallel one can think of will be the impression one gets when Shité in Noh joins the chorus to recite a third person narrative describing herself.

Beckett's latest play, *Ohio Impromptu*, which had its première at the Beckett Symposium in Ohio last May, is unique in that it presents two characters on stage, namely, Listener and Reader. Listener remains completely silent throughout the play while Reader reads aloud from the book in front of him. However, except for the fact that the voice of *Rockaby* is here incarnated as Reader, the fundamental structure is unchanged. For it is suggested by Beckett's direction that they be "as alike in appearance as possible", that these two characters are, despite their separate identities, those halves of a split self with which we are by now familiar. And what Reader reads from the book is clearly a story of Listener's life, forcing upon Listener a cruel realisation of his whole life as a failure.

AFTER THESE comparative analyses of Noh and Beckett's plays, I shall try to place the subject in a broader historical perspective. Samuel Beckett started writing plays at the point in the history of Western theatre where most of the realistic conventions of drama, together with the underlying metaphysical world-view, broke down. Or one should perhaps say that he himself was among the greatest subversive forces which brought about this collapse. In his ruthless efforts to strip the theatre of everything that is not absolutely necessary, Beckett has created something unprecedented in Western theatre, a new form of theatre which might best be called "the theatre of mind."

My argument is that, in his very originality, this 20th-century avant-garde playwright from the westernmost island of Europe has arrived somewhere close to the point at which Zeami arrived in

the 14th century on the easternmost island of Asia.

In both Zeami's theatre and Beckett's, nothing happens, everything has already happened (hence the complaint of "How boring!"), but someone emerges out of an unknown country. This country, which Beckett in *Ohio Impromptu* calls "the profounds of mind", is at once unknown and half-remembered. The "someone" who arrives in Noh is certainly "the other" to oneself, but anybody who has been really moved by a performance of Noh will understand that this "someone" is also the deepest self of the audience, buried under the deepest layer of culture, not necessarily Japanese culture alone.

In Beckett, the "otherness" of the "someone" is far more ambiguously and viciously entangled with one's own self. Under the malediction undreamt of by Zeami, Beckett must scrutinise modern self-consciousness and pursue it to the point where it threatens to turn into solipsism, autism, de-personalisation, or schizophrenia ("That way lies madness"). And at the end of his play, Beckett *must* refuse to quiet the tortured soul of the hero, let alone absolve it—although one has a feeling sometimes, especially in his latest plays, that the Beckettian endgame can approach an end, that Beckett can come close to giving a quietus to the hero's sufferings. Be that as it may, it is a triumph of his art that he has incorporated the very structure of the split soul of modern man into a perfect theatrical form.

The striking affinity, despite all the obvious differences, between Beckett and Noh might be described as the conjunction of opposites; but I am personally rather attracted towards the image of the great wheel of the history of some universal drama (if such a thing exists) having come full circle, or again the image of that mythical serpent, Ouroboros, which, like a Möbiusstrip, has its tail in its mouth. It is interesting to know in passing that the affinity has been testified to by contemporary actors and directors, both East and West. Several of Beckett's plays have been performed successfully by Noh actors in Japan, and a number of Western directors and actors have affirmed that training in Noh theatre is one of the best approaches to performing Beckett's plays.

FINALLY, I would stress that Zeami's ideal of theatre consisted in "transmitting a *hana* (flower) from mind to mind." It may be true that what is transmitted in Beckett's theatre from mind to mind is something too bleak to be called a "flower." And yet we are grateful to him for creating a theatre so profoundly concerned with the agonies of a human soul, which today surely needs calming, and if possible release, just as badly as it did six hundred years ago.

Translated from the
German by Leila Vennewitz

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Recent Fiction—By PENELOPE LIVELY

HERE IS A selection of novels as eclectic as it is international. The committed reader of fiction, I imagine, is interested in diversity and cannot but feel amply satisfied with this recent output—English, American, Austrian, Italian, Czech, Irish. Periodically literary diet is decided for us by the mysterious tyrannies of what is fashionable or what the editorial directors of publishing houses decide is right for the times. Just at this moment there seems to be a healthy liberalism around in the publishing world. Amongst these novels, you can be taken aside by Calvino and addressed on the very nature of reading itself—included in the plot, indeed, as one of the characters, the Reader—or you can enjoy the cool authorial detachment of Barbara Pym or the lush expansive narration of John Updike. In what seems to be the age of the picaresque novel it is good to see realism holding its own nicely; but above all it is a relief to feel that for the moment at least neither fashion nor editorial whim dictates. And there is a further satisfaction in listening to the literary echoes set up as you read, in thinking about how fiction begets fiction: behind Barbara Pym I kept hearing Ivy Compton-Burnett, Calvino's games and sophistries recall Borges. The novel itself tells a story, from time to time.

"You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel, *If On a Winter's Night a Traveller*.¹ Relax. Concentrate. . . . Find the most comfortable position. . . . Adjust the light." First, though, you have been to the bookshop, selected the book from all those others you've been planning to read for ages, you need to go with other books on your shelves etc., returned home. . . . And then, when you have read thirty pages, you find to your exasperation that the copy is faulty: the sections have been bound alternately with sections from some quite different novel. You return to the bookshop, complain, are given a new copy, and fall in with another Reader, an attractive girl called Ludmilla. You agree to keep in touch, and discuss the novel. Impossibly, infuriatingly, this copy also is defective: it has blank pages. But in any case you and Ludmilla are now interested in this second novel entangled with *If On a Winter's Night*, a Polish novel called *Outside the Town of Malbork*.

¹ *If On a Winter's Night a Traveller*. By ITALO CALVINO. Translated by WILLIAM WEAVER. Secker & Warburg, £6.95.

So you both try to trace the rest of this novel and find that. . . .

Extracts from ten different novels are threaded through the pages of Calvino's book, alternating with the story of the Reader—you, me, the narrator—in pursuit of one title after another, for each tantalisingly vanishes in mid-narrative, and increasingly involved with Ludmilla. The whole construction is a sophisticated tease, reflecting upon the nature of fiction, the process of reading, the appetites that it satisfies, the relationship between fiction and reality. And you—Calvino's intimacies are infectious—are perhaps going to be as alternately exasperated and fascinated as I was. The provocations are of course partly deliberate: the stories break off because the reader's irritation then proves the compulsion of the story. We want stories; in some strange way we need stories. Calvino seems to be making a connection between this need, this natural predilection, and the narrative structure of life itself:

"The lives of individuals of the human race form a constant plot, in which every attempt to isolate one piece of living that has a meaning separate from the rest—for example, the meeting of two people, which will become decisive for both—must bear in mind that each of the two brings with himself a texture of events, environments, other people, and that from the meeting, in turn, other stories will be derived. . . ."

His ten story fragments, though, have no such connections, except that in the first three the same character crops up: each spins off into oblivion, leaving the readers groping away in pursuit, only to find that the Polish novel is in fact Cimmerian (Cimmeria itself, of course, no longer exists, devoured by more powerful neighbours), that it is in any case a fake, that a manuscript has vanished. . . . Nationalities shift from one "novel" to the next—French, Irish, Japanese. Other characters join Ludmilla and the Reader in the obsessive hunt, they break off for reflections on their own obsession: "Reading is going toward something that is about to be, and no one yet knows what it will be." In the last pages we find ourselves in a huge library in which, at last, the catalogue lists all ten titles. Other nameless readers discuss their activity—ponderously, mystically, definitively: "The ultimate meaning to which all stories refer has two faces: the continuity of life, the inevitability of death."

If *On a Winter's Night a Traveller* is a fictional game: crafty, imaginative and ingenious. It crackles with ideas, the language of William Weaver's translation is elegant and versatile, the book's structure both tantalises and provokes. I did wonder, given the deliberate range of the "novels", why Calvino hadn't chosen to give them greater stylistic variety; all except one are written in the same rather flat narrative form. And, similarly, I kept searching for the links that would have made a satisfactory parallel with the associative chains of real life—the glancing moments at which two lives touch, the complex texture of events that spawn other events, the strange web of the past. It is a book that raises more questions than it answers.

RABBIT IS RICH is an ironic title, of course.² In this third volume of John Updike's saga of middle America—successor to *Rabbit Run* and *Rabbit Redux*—we find Harry Angstrom, Rabbit, in his forties, overweight, sexually jaded, at war with his son and sceptical of his nation. It is 1979. Harry's riches are his status as Chief Sales Representative at Springer Motors, his membership of the Flying Eagle Golf Club and circle of drinking, golfing cronies, the thirty Krugerrands he buys at \$377.14 each and later trades in for old silver dollars in response to the caprices of the world's fiscal climate.

Throughout the book the state of the nation echoes, off-stage. The energy crisis is at its height, there are riots at gas-stations—"Like old films of Vietnam or Budapest but it is Levittown right down the road, north of Philadelphia." In languid sessions round the golf club pool Harry's cronies contemplate "nuking" the Arabs. The Carter administration bumbles on. The hostages are taken. Harry, caught unawares by middle age, lusts after the young wife of one of his friends, notes that when he walks down the street he seems to be the oldest person in sight, pulls over to let girl drivers overtake him, indulges in automobile nostalgia with his colleague, and his wife's erstwhile lover, Charlie Stavros. He no longer resents Charlie; cosiness has the edge over hostility—"a man fucks your wife, it puts a new value on her, within limits." And it is Janice and her mother, old Ma Springer, in connivance who, presently, turf Charlie out of Springer Motors to make way for Nelson, the college dropout son and heir. In an orgy of male nostalgia, Harry and Charlie mull over the petrol-happy past, the guzzling Chevies and Oldsmobiles, the V-8s, the Buicks, the "cruising" days—"Gasoline. . . Didn't we use to burn it up?" The oil crisis and the car haunt the pages of the book as images of the

new, mean America. Springer Motors has the Toyota franchise; Harry sells Coronas and Corollas and Celicas. No self-respecting American, nowadays, is seen around in anything but a foreign compact. Detroit is dead. The old convertibles are only for the blacks and the spics, and even they'll soon get wise. The imagery of cars is presented with all Updike's lavish and leisurely descriptive power: the fins and the tail-lights like a carton of red eggs, the "stats" of the new pared-down clever infiltrating Hondas and Toyotas and Datsuns.

This narrative spaciousness has always been one of his strengths, overflowing at times into self-indulgence—the page-long descriptions of a character, the minute dissection of a room or a landscape. In *Rabbit Is Rich*, the physical world of America at this moment—the summer of 1979—is given a fictional reality that is both precise and dream-like: the asphalt lakes of Springer Motors' strip-city location, the décor of a friend's bathroom in which Harry prowls and pries, the sleazy apartment in which a youthful party takes place. And the past constantly nudges; another Updike speciality. Harry, grumbling and pondering his way from summer into winter, gropes backwards: to his parents, his youth, his old black pal, Skeeter, of whose death in a police shoot-out he learns from an anonymously posted newspaper clipping. The violent death of Jill (in *Rabbit Redux*) lurks always as a mine-field in his relationship with his son, Nelson, who loved her. Old Ma Springer—a splendid character—lives with Harry and Janice and provides a kind of Greek chorus on old events and old grudges. And Harry himself, throughout the novel, fusses over his fantasies of a girl who came with her boy-friend to buy a car, at the beginning, and whom he believes to be his daughter by his long-ago abandoned girl-friend, Ruth. She is indeed Ruth's daughter, we find at the end, but whether by Harry or not is left ambiguous. And on the very last page Harry is sitting in his new house—the first house he has ever owned and in which he thinks "he might begin to read books, instead of just magazines and newspapers, and begin to learn about history, say"—nursing a baby. A girl baby: "Fortune's hostage, heart's desire, a grand-daughter. His. Another nail in his coffin. His."

THE BABY HAD, of course, to be a girl. The awful elemental force of the American woman howls down the pages of Rabbit's saga. Mothers, wives, mistresses—Harry cringes from them, champions them, lusts after them. He has never cared for intelligence in women (though both his wife and mother-in-law display no mean business sense); his sexual fantasies as he eyes Cindy Murkitt at the swimming-pool are infantile ramblings—her "Little circular darkdab sucky toes." And in the wife-

² *Rabbit Is Rich*. By JOHN UPDIKE. André Deutsch, £7.95.

swapping session on a Caribbean jaunt in which the golf-club circle indulge he is cheated of his turn with Cindy by—of course—an emergency summons from Ma Springer. Nelson in trouble again—the self-pitying ineffective albatross of a son. Women dominate Harry's world; not from any deference to women's lib—which is going on out there somewhere presumably but is no concern of Harry's—but in their much older and more elemental American form of matriarch and grey eminence. "I never was too good at thinking things through", Harry says to Ruth. "Men don't have to be", she replies. It is a man's world, middle America, but women pull the strings. And a world too, according to Updike, in which most people are principally engaged either in having sex or thinking about having sex. Well, maybe, and sad loveless stuff it all is, a wearying cycle of sucking and eating and suspecting that the fields next door are always greener. Harry and Janice, inflamed by possession of their thirty Krugerrands, make love—sorry, fuck—amid the scattered gold coins. Afterwards, one is missing; Harry, panic-stricken and detumescent, finds it at last between mattress and bed side-rail. In another marital session, he submits to Janice's overtures while poring over the latest issue of *Consumer Reports* (Summer Cooling, 1979: air conditioner or fan...).

AND THE FUTURE does not look much more promising. Nelson, hanging around home, apathetically marrying his pregnant girl-friend, whines that college is Dullsville, accuses Harry of thinking only of money and things, but himself hankers after the family firm, toadies to his mother and grandmother, despises blacks, smoulders behind twenty years of grievances. Like his father, you long to strangle the little wretch. And this is the curious magic that John Updike has worked with Harry Angstrom; for all that he is, you end up irritably sympathetic. Why? Because, I think, of a determined perverse resilience, an optimism, even, a life-force seething away inside all that confusion and pseudo-worldliness and, now in middle-age, self-knowledge. "You're so glad to be alive", says the golf-club wife who turns out always to have carried a torch for him. John Updike's skill in these books has been to savage a society through the eyes of a hero who does not himself know what it is he is seeing, and yet keep the reader's sympathy. You don't get tired of Harry Angstrom. There is no indication as to whether or not he is to be abandoned now, at the end of this third instalment, sitting in his new house with his grand-daughter in his lap and the Arabs calling the tune; I hope not.

³ *An Unsuitable Attachment*. By BARBARA PYM. Macmillan, £6.95.

AN UNSUITABLE ATTACHMENT³ is the novel that was turned down by Cape (and other publishers) in 1963, after which Barbara Pym published nothing until 1977. She wrote one novel in the interim (*The Sweet Dove Died*), which also failed to find a home, though it was eventually published by Macmillan in 1978, and the inescapable conclusion is that this rejection stopped her writing. *An Unsuitable Attachment* comes, at last, with benefit of an introduction by Philip Larkin, who is too reticent to enlarge on the important part he himself played in her rediscovery (he and Lord David Cecil were the two critics who named her in the *Times Literary Supplement* as the most underrated writer of the century, Larkin then following this with an article on the books). As he says, it belongs to the early and most exuberant group of novels, and he expresses mild doubts as to its narrative strength which, with infinite respect, I cannot entirely share. John Challow, the male half of the unsuitable attachment, is perhaps not fully rounded as a character, but the vaguely unspecified unsuitability of the match seems to me just one of those indeterminate unsettling situations that are a Pym characteristic. Her narrative line has often been slight—though none the less oddly gripping—and for the rest, as Larkin says, we are back on the old territory. It is a wonderful book: hilarious, unexpected, touching and occasionally faintly disturbing. Anyone who has enjoyed Barbara Pym—plus any misguided soul who so far has not—is going to want to read it, and also to read Larkin's succinct and sympathetic introduction.

The cast is, in a sense, familiar: two sisters, one married to a clergyman, assorted neighbours including an anthropologist. So is the plot, heralded on the first page as we meet the sisters, twenty-five-year-old Penelope and Sophia, the vicar's wife, displaying furtive interest in the newly arrived bachelor down the road. We have men and we have women, the wed and the unwed, and the conflict is on. All Barbara Pym's novels are about the war of genders (not the sex war, which is something rather different) first and foremost, long before they are (as most critics have claimed) about social nuances. Indeed, the very first paragraph of *An Unsuitable Attachment* includes a statement of the situation in perfect Pym language: "... for as an anthropologist he knew that men and women may observe each other as warily as wild animals hidden in long grass." What all the novels do is to present a situation in which bachelors and spinsters and husbands and wives are locked in subtle combat, pursue or are pursued, prey on one another. I am always surprised that the feminists have never claimed Barbara Pym (though I suspect she would have indignantly rejected any such affiliation); of all women novelists no one has dealt so effectively with male aspirations. Pym men are frequently vain, complacent, self-absorbed and parasitical. One thinks,

with what infinite pleasure, of Archdeacon Hoccleve in *Some Tame Gazelle*. And when they are in pursuit of an available unmarried woman it is with one thing in mind, and one thing only: getting their thesis typed, or their shirts washed, their supper cooked, their sheets turned sides to middle.

The men usually win, technically. They evade marriage, or marry the other woman, they secure the required services. But the women are the moral victors; they provide a rich and biting commentary. They endure and observe and walk off with all the best lines; their beady eyes are turned on the unsuspecting male, noting that his shoes are not quite right, or his manners wanting: "Was it right . . . that she should stand while men sat? But the question was academic, for there was nothing she could do about it." And meanwhile the unperceptive creatures reflect on the amenability of women: "How convenient women were, Rupert thought, accepting her offer, the way they were always 'just going' to make coffee or tea or perhaps had just roasted a joint in the oven or made a cheese soufflé." There is a whole thesis to be written one day, incidentally (by a woman, and typed by a man), on the significance of food in Barbara Pym's novels: all those propitiatory meals, all those carefully devised dinner menus, the selection of dishes in restaurants—and who pays for whom.

RUPERT STONEBIRD, the anthropologist, appears on the last page of the book to be about to turn to Penelope, who has been gamely making a play for him from page one. The heroine of *An Unsuitable Attachment*, though, is not Penelope, whose tartan trews and beehive hairdo are all that tether the novel to period, for as ever Barbara Pym detaches private from public events in all but occasional references to dress or surroundings, but Ianthe Broome, the librarian whose mother was a canon's widow (a status apparently cutting even more ice than that of the canon himself). Ianthe owns a nice little house and Hepplewhite chairs and a Pembroke table, enough to provoke, eventually, a proposal from Mervyn Cantrell, her odious superior at the library. Too late, though—Ianthe by then is in love with the new library assistant who will soon be cosily installed in the little house, making his mark. "There is a certain type of man who is always putting up shelves", as Sophia reflects. Ianthe marries John, Sophia continues tacitly to suffer the inadequacies of Mark and indulge in what looks like a faintly unhealthy relationship with her cat Faustina (a superb and malevolent minor character, stalking among the lobster patties at a church bazaar, leaving hairs even on the altar cloth). Everybody goes to Rome on an extended church outing during which

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and many others, known and unknown.

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relationships become gloriously complex and significant. The pattern has been as in most of the novels, especially the early ones: expectation spiced with disillusion, culminating in resigned acceptance.

That is what happens. The delicacies lie, as usual, in how the tale is told. Barbara Pym's prose has always had a deceptive simplicity; she is telling a story, first and foremost, and the reader is lulled by the steady onward march of the narrative into an unsuspecting calm. Only on the next page does the delayed-action effect of a phrase or remark hit you with its full impact. Consider this, the deceased Mrs Broome's reflection on her librarian daughter: "working with books was, on the face of it, a ladylike occupation, Mrs Broome had thought. . . ." Oh, the time-bomb efficiency of that "on the face of it." Or this—Daisy Pettigrew, the vet's sister, on sexual distinctions: ". . . male and female created He them, more or less, or as near as makes no matter." Again and again, comfortable and unsuspecting as a Pym hero (inappropriate word) one reads a page, turns over, only to be brought up short by the realisation of what has just been said, the appreciation of some barbed comment, the implication of a remark. Apart from the cat there are other delectable minor characters. Ianthe's aunt, married to the rector of a Mayfair parish, conveniently forbidden by her doctor to fast during Lent and thankful that her husband has not "felt the call to serve in a slum parish or on a new housing estate": "Somebody has got to minister to the rich." And Sophia's aunt in Italy, contributing her mite to a sticky meeting by introducing Ianthe to an Italian professor as ". . . an English lady from north-west London. . . . She attends the church where my niece's husband is vicar." And there is a phrase that I shall cherish for a long time: "a mild social occasion." We know exactly what is meant by that.

MOST OF THE social occasions in *An Unsuitable Attachment* are mild: little dinners, a church bazaar, an anthropological garden party. But the human undercurrents are not. And, funny and deft as it is, this novel is not without those darker reflections that herald the bleaker vision of *Quartet in Autumn*, which I suppose must be thought of as the best of the lot. "What is there for women but love?" says Sophia, at one point. To which her amiable and unseeing husband replies sternly, "Now, darling, you know there are many things." Behind the wit and fun lie the sombre ghosts that are Barbara Pym's theme: loneliness, rejection, solitary courage.

THE FIVE STORIES in *The Royal Game*⁴ make strange reading: an absorbing and at times disturbing marriage of *fin de siècle* steaminess and a Maughamesque decadence, as though Viennese sophistry had got into the jungle and run riot. I have never read Zweig before. As John Fowles says in his introduction to the collection, to most people who have grown up since the last war he is just a name, vaguely associated with biography and *belles lettres* rather than fiction. He died in 1942 and most of his books are long out of print in English. And yet in his time he was world-famous on a Greene or Maugham scale, best known as a biographer—Erasmus, Fouché, Marie Antoinette among others—but celebrated also for the *Novellen*. He wrote only one full-length novel, but spoke himself of his short stories as concentrated full-size novels, emphasising his own obsession with concentration and reduction and concern with psychological exploration: "A psychological problem is as attractive for me in a living man as in a historical person; so my novels and biographies come out of the same sources and are complementary to each other."

This refinement and concentration of interest both give the stories their power and, in the end, a certain lifelessness. Zweig gives you the inside of people's heads, and nothing beyond that. His characters are all driven by their own obsessions—by love or by fear or by courage—but move through undefined landscapes and are themselves curiously undefined except by a state of mind: we do not know what they look like or how they have come to be what they are. In "Letter from an Unknown Woman"—his best-known story, filmed by Max Ophüls—the heroine as a child conceives a fatal and eternal passion for the novelist living in the same apartment block as her family. The novelist is a womaniser and philanderer. The girl contrives a meeting with him when she is grown-up and spends a night in his bed. She has a child by him. Many years later she is again approached by him and again sleeps with him; he has no recollection of their previous liaison and no idea of her passion. Every year on his birthday she sends him—anonously—white roses. The child dies, and his mother, herself on the verge of death (of flu, not distress, to introduce a harshly prosaic note), writes the novelist a long impassioned account of what has happened. It sounds absurd; no one could carry on like that, you feel. Yet you read on, curiously compelled. And I suppose that Zweig's determined omission of any kind of narrative or literary spaciousness in the stories must be deliberate; the chronicler of emotional claustrophobia has to immerse the reader in the characters' own mental torments; the normal interventions and perceptions of a physical world are out of place.

In that sense, the stories work superbly—the chess fanaticism of the title story, the terrified

⁴ *The Royal Game and other stories*. By STEFAN ZWIG. Translated by JILL SUTCLIFFE. Jonathan Cape, £6.95.

adulterous wife of "Fear", the doctor in "Amok" who himself dies to protect the secret of the dead woman who rejected him and after whom he lusted. And yet this absence of any wider scene, of any social or historical relevance, does restrict the stories; not quite fatally, but to the extent that it relegates them to genre stories rather than the aristocracy of the short story you feel they might have joined. More breadth, more depth, more reference to the world and its ways, and they might have achieved Jamesian overtones; as it is they seem closer to Maugham. Admittedly, that is partly the effect of a device oddly beloved of almost every-one writing short stories before about 1935: the tale within a tale. But at the same time it is the result of an authorial distancing; with this choice of narrative style the author takes a side-step, and the story loses immediacy, though it has to be said that Zweig then recovers a lot of dramatic ground with his total invasion of the obsessed minds of his characters. It is a churlish reviewing device to grumble at a book for not being something else. The great strength of the short story has always been that it is a portmanteau: it accommodates innumerable intentions and innumerable effects. I want now, though, to read that novel of Zweig's, to see if within a wider frame he allowed himself greater discursiveness.

THE CITY of Maurice Leitch's novel⁵—winner of last year's Whitbread Prize for fiction—is Belfast; given a curious anonymity, seldom described but nevertheless lurking beyond the pages of the book like a significant off-stage character. This is a powerful book, taking the form and to some extent the style of a thriller, but much more ambitious in content. What Leitch has most subtly done is to tell a story of gangster violence, in which a hired assassin, Galloway, lifts from hospital an imprisoned Protestant leader, Silver Steele, wanted for a reckoning by his former associates, loses him, and locks with him in a fatal personal struggle of flight and pursuit. Silver is a man of violence, conditioned by the mean streets of the city. Galloway is a Scottish thug who learned to indulge his psychotic willingness to kill in Cyprus, in the British army; high on grass most of the time, he is prepared to commit any crime for money, or just to satisfy his perverted sense of self-importance. His ultimate pursuit of Silver ceases to have anything to do with the job he has been given by those who hired him, and becomes a matter of *amour-propre*: no one gets away from Galloway. His hirer is a politician, a thug at a different level of

⁵ *Silver's City*. By MAURICE LEITCH. Secker & Warburg, £6.95.

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society; and beyond him still, it is hinted, is yet another layer of cynical manipulation of the benighted city and its terrible and uncontrollable circumstances.

For the fact that Silver and his hunters are Protestants—casually mentioned once only—is in a sense neither here nor there. What Maurice Leitch is writing about is a battleground of thugs, like against like, in which sectarianism has been drained of all meaning, and the original convictions long forgotten as the perpetuation of violence flings to the fore the men who thrive on it; one of those historical low points when morality has despaired and the scum of society has risen to the top. The analogy that springs to mind is Nazi Germany.

I suppose that the low-key, almost laconic narrative style of *Silver's City* could be thought derivative. We are in Greenland here: dry understatement, authorial self-effacement, even touches of pathos—a child's plastic bucket and tricycle outside the house of Galloway's first victim, the little girl who innocently lets him in to gun down her father. And there is a golden-hearted tart—the only character I did feel slipped over into cliché. But Leitch handles this difficult fictional manner in his own way and brings it off superbly; the writing is spare and economical, the narrative tight and exciting. So little does he waste words that the reader needs to keep his wits about him not to

lose the thread or miss a vital aside; the interplay of characters and allegiances, the complexity of who is doing what and why, is as confusing as it presumably is in reality in a society of gangsters. The form of the book, therefore, seems most effectively to reflect the matter—a skilful and serious piece of writing about Northern Ireland.

THE BOOK OF LAUGHTER AND FORGETTING is a spiral of interlinked fragments;⁶ part novel, part fable, part intellectual credo, historical commentary, rumination on the human condition. I kept feeling I should be more appreciative; there is much that impresses, a good deal that moves, but in the last resort its fractured structure serves to confuse as much as to edify. Milan Kundera is a Czech exile resident in Paris—one of the 120,000 to flee their country after the Russian invasion. His book is a savage and ironic finger pointed at the lunacies and cynicisms of the régime. Husak appears; the president of forgetting, Kundera calls him, and much of the author's most telling commentary is to do with his observations on the desperate need of dictators to obliterate the past; the renaming of the streets of Prague, the air-brushing from official photographs of discredited leaders. "People are always shouting they want to create a better future. It's not true. . . . The only reason people want to be masters of the future is to change the past."

This theme of readjustment or retention of memory runs through the book, in the fictional snatches as well as the reflections on reality. A young widow desperately pursues the notebooks from which she can reconstruct the chronological facts of her life with her husband. A man tries to recover his letters from a former mistress, feeling that her possession of them allows her to keep a piece of his life in her hands. Children crop up as symbols of a deceptive innocence, even a warped innocence: "Children, after all, have no past whatsoever." Mankind, Kundera proposes, is moving in the direction of infancy, childhood is the image of the future. In a final extended fable the tragic young widow, Tamina, becomes the prisoner and plaything of a gang of children who tease and abuse her and eventually watch her drown herself.

A bleak book, despite the explosive inventiveness of its narrative fragments—sexual merry-go-rounds, fantasy interludes—and its other recurrent preoccupation with the function of laughter. A funeral party is collectively seized with laughter when someone's hat falls into the open grave; a man and woman are—almost—incapacitated by

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⁶ *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. By MILAN KUNDERA. Translated by MICHAEL HENRY HEIM. Faber & Faber. £7.95.

laughter on the verge of intercourse. Two students analysing Ionesco's play *Rhinoceros* reduce the class to helpless laughter and then, laughing themselves, levitate through the ceiling. This episode baffled me, frankly, and indeed I found the whole laughter theme somewhat impenetrable. Laughter, Kundera seems to be saying, is both a release and a weapon. Well, yes. What is not clear is quite how this connects with the book's other,

larger and more easily approached discussion of the nature of the past and why it is both so valued and so feared. Short, closely written and elaborately structured, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* demands careful reading; the rewards are there, but the reader is left also with a slightly dizzying sense of too much imagery and allusion and invention for the vehicle that has to carry it all. It is a *tour de force*, but hardly a novel.

The Reflections of Peter Bauer

On Economic Delusions—By ALAN WALTERS

PETER BAUER'S early major contributions to economics were studies of the plantation rubber industry and of West African trade. They still remain the most incisive, scholarly and illuminating accounts of those activities, and have set standards by which subsequent work in these fields of study have come to be judged. After writing on commodity stabilisation and on the Indian economic scene he turned to wider issues in *Dissent on Development* in which, by close argument and much erudition, he displayed the paradoxes and misconceptions of "development economics." In this latest book¹ the principal themes are wide-ranging and reflective discussions of certain dominant contemporary ideas and ideologies.

At the outset Bauer examines the implications of "economic equality" as a political and social norm. He does not address the classical concept of Equality under the Law but rather the ideology promoted by the insistence on equality of outcome in terms of incomes and wealth. He argues in the chapter "The Grail of Equality" that attempts to achieve this aim by political means result in wide inequalities of power between rulers and subjects—greater inequality of power is accepted for a promised reduction in differences in conventionally measured income. He examines also proposals for "global egalitarianism" which if pursued *à outrance* would require a world government with totalitarian powers. "Class on the Brain" combines lightness of touch with effective criticism of the clichés and misconceptions about class in Britain. The principal argument is that the stereotype of the "class system" in Britain mistakes a differentiated but open society for a closed or even caste society.

Much of Bauer's new book is about the relationships between the West and the "Third

World", i.e. Asia, Africa, and Latin America. One major theme is the influence of the widespread feeling of guilt and the baleful results on policy. Resources provided by the guilt-ridden West have helped to sustain many brutal tyrannical régimes in the Third World, especially in South-east Asia and Africa. Some of the manifestations of the guilt-complex quoted in this book would be merely entertaining, were it not for the sad reality behind the rhetoric. There is also a debunking of the myth that population pressure is a main cause of Third World poverty. The "population explosion" is largely due to a steep decline in mortality, and this represents a substantial improvement in the human condition: people on the whole prefer a long life to a short one.

WHAT OF THE GENERAL state of economics? Professor Bauer's main conclusion, supported by much specific evidence, is that while economics has made major advances in recent decades, especially on the periphery, this has been accompanied by an erosion of the core of the subject. Many prominent practitioners have lost all contact both with reality and with the fundamentals of the subject, such as basic supply-and-demand analysis.

In the last 15 years or so Peter Bauer has become widely known as an effective critic of wealth transfers from Western governments to governments in the Third World, popularly known as "foreign aid." The apprehensions of the Aid Lobby about the impact of Bauer's arguments are well justified, as is evident from public discussion in America. However, this subject is only a small part of Bauer's work in general, and in this volume it comprises only about a third of the discussion. Even so, the main emphasis is on the basic arguments behind the policy and on some of the anomalies which accompany it.

¹ *Equality, the Third World and Economic Delusion*. By P. T. BAUER. Weidenfeld, £15.00.

Throughout Bauer adopts stringent standards both for consistent argument and for the marshalling of evidence. His method of reasoning resembles that of Karl Popper. He develops the logic of the argument, derives propositions from it, and then examines the evidence to see whether this is consistent with the argument. The logic is impeccable (and, at times, even Talmudic in character, as in the chapter on foreign aid); but it is never dull. We are often surprised by the unexpected implications of a logical position—for instance, in the discussion on population growth. Bauer allows us no easy resting place for our misconceptions. However, it is in the survey and marshalling of the evidence that a masterly touch is particularly apparent. Rigour of method and respect for evidence are prominent in the essay on "Economic History as theory." Although primarily a review of a well-known book by Sir John Hicks, this essay ascends to a reflective and at the same time remorseless review of the "poverty of historicism." Bauer recognises that however futile our attempts to develop a general theory of history (and, especially, an economic theory of history), the attempts have a great fascination for those who believe in historical determinism, and the efforts can be expected to continue.

ALTHOUGH Peter Bauer disclaims for himself a "theory of history" he has consistent ideas on the process of development, based on the insight of classical and neo-classical economists and those of some historians. He sees economic forces operating within the framework of *mores*, institutions, religious and cultural conditions and political arrangements, and interacting with people's capacities and motivations. He is especially illuminating on the interaction between the variables of economic analysis (such as prices and quantities) and the factors treated as given in conventional theory. He avoids the facile treatment of many "development economists" in trying to explain economic performance without taking account of cultural and political diversities. Although Bauer is widely criticised as a simple

exponent of *laissez-faire* it is obvious that he is well aware of complex realities; and this in fact is a particular strength of his treatment. Peter Bauer and Professor Thomas Sowell in the USA are, in my view, among the most scholarly and discerning contemporary academic writers on the interaction of cultural, political, and economic factors in economic development.

THE FAMOUS POLEMIC (first published in ENCOUNTER) against Professor Ali Mazrui's Reith lectures is definitely worth rereading. Mazrui's *leitmotiv* was political hostility to the liberal societies of the West. In Mazrui's scheme of things Development and Wealth descended on Western societies somehow like manna from heaven, and these societies then went on to use their new power to exploit the rest of the world and Africa in particular. Thus, the West is responsible for the backwardness of Africa; apparently the West is also to blame for the chaotic conditions of Black Africa decades after the end of Colonialism. Mazrui's Reith Lectures were essentially an exercise in Marxist reductionism (and an inferior exercise at that). Bauer has no difficulty in showing the extensive backwardness of pre-colonial Africa, and that Ethiopia and Liberia never were colonies. One still wonders how the BBC came to invite Ali Mazrui to give these important lectures, and indeed to provide large-scale finance to enable him to tour Africa for the purpose.

I was also much impressed by the essay on the legacy of British colonial rule in Africa. The argument of this essay is contrary to conventional wisdom, but quite convincing. According to the most influential discussion of British colonial rule, this régime was very damaging to the needs of Africans most of the time—but in the terminal years the colonial rulers mended their ways and came to be more concerned with the welfare of their subjects . . . Bauer argues that this stereotype is precisely the opposite of reality. Up to about the 1930s the colonial government ruled on the whole with a very light touch and interfered very little with trade, industry, and social arrangements. The rulers, nevertheless, provided public security, limited but firm administration, a policy which established pre-conditions for further development. During this period the conditions of existence were transformed over much of British Africa, particularly West Africa. From the 1930s onward state economic controls burgeoned—among the most important were the official marketing boards, state organisations with the sole right to export all major crops of the African colonies. The declared purpose of their establishment was the reduction of the impact of price fluctuations on the local

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economies. When they were established formal guarantees were given in Parliament (and also locally) that these organisations would not be used to tax the producers. In fact they promptly became instruments for the confiscation of a large part of producers' incomes, a process which helped to politicise and to corrupt much of economic life throughout British colonial Africa. The operation of the State Export Monopolies placed huge sums of money and vast powers at the disposal of the incoming rulers, who understandably welcomed and continued this system; it enabled them to strengthen their grip over their subjects. The system of Import Licensing introduced during the War, and largely maintained since then, has had somewhat similar though less pervasive results. In Africa, where there is no effective rationing at the retail level, the receipt of an import licence usually bestows windfall profits; and corruption is the inevitable outcome of such controls.

AFTER READING these pages one is forced to reflect on the general conditions which brought about so many sorry results. Bauer does not provide us with a fully articulated theory of why some societies advance while others stagnate or decline. But his treatment is thought-provoking and indeed evokes many more ideas than he himself expresses. As I see it the overriding ideology of Egalitarianism is behind much of recent political conflict both in the Third World and in the West. The fascination of "Equality" and the opportunity "egalitarianism" presents for self-righteousness and the display of moral superiority, and for exploiting feelings of guilt, have created a well-nigh irresistible groundswell. The very term "inequality" carries a stigma, implying a reprehensible state of affairs brought about by man's cupidity and society's indifference.

Post-colonial politics based on these ideas have proved to be fraught with danger. Under a simple majority system, 51% of the electorate has an interest in forming a coalition to expropriate the other 49%—democracy thus interpreted is more likely to issue in despotism than in "a society of equals." Democratic societies if they are to survive must limit the powers of government. If the people are to be free the government must be in chains. In Hong Kong, as Bauer reminds us, people are freer than almost anywhere in the world. Yet Hong Kong is not democratic in the accepted sense of the term. But government there is very limited. Thus democracy may not be indispensable for personal freedom, but limited government surely is. Many believe that only democracy through universal suffrage can ensure limited government in the long run. But I am persuaded that democracy can sur-

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vive only if democratic institutions are constrained by constitutions which limit the power of the legislature.

I also suspect that the corroding concept of equality is partly responsible for the sorry state of economics of which Bauer provides a wealth of examples in this book. The readiness of prominent economists to canvass plainly inadequate notions suggests the acceptance of what may be termed "equality" of ideas. Economists seem to have shared the post-War erosion of ideals, of moral and professional standards evident in other fields, including literature and the visual arts. Well-established truth in the discipline came to be

ignored or even derided in favour of the latest trends and fads, even if these were both insubstantial and ephemeral. (Witness, for instance, the notion of a perpetual "dollar shortage." At times one gets the impression that economists and their public are ready to believe almost anything . . .)

Is the exploitation of the beguiling concept of equality responsible for much of the political and intellectual havoc on the contemporary scene? Orwell might have urged us to argue that some ideas would have to be "more equal" than others: in the sense of being more critical, more rigorous, more in touch with events. Ideological notions, as Bauer tells us, cannot stand very much reality.

Decision Theory

I was skulking in my eyrie
Letting things go from bad to worse
Projecting zero growth, risk averse
Until I discovered Decision Theory.

Now watch me check out a hunch
Traversing a decision tree
With simian agility
Selecting the optimal branch

Then preparing the right sales pitch
And going into the market place
With a bright enthusiastic face
To sell to some son of a bitch.

Of course we'll never *be* the same
But what could be more stylish
Than joining in with fantastic relish
Beating the world at its own game

Spreading dismay and confusion
By having an indecent hard-on

For management-science jargon.
A new satire—*manic collusion!*

Excelling at hard-necked barter
And faking the sheen of success
No dossier who couldn't care less
A "results-oriented self-starter."

How I flummoxed the interview board!
My Expected Monetary Value
Was pretty hot, I can tell you
After some of the points I scored.

Unnerve them with "inner resources"
Bursting with piss and vinegar
An affront to every manager
On the in-service courses

Coming tops on the simulation
Amazing the timid and gauche
With your Interactive Approach
To Multi-Criterion Optimisation!

Michael Foley

MEMOIR

Remembering Curzio Malaparte

By Luigi Barzini



CURZIO MALAPARTE was recognised as one of the most talented (if also best-selling) writers of his generation. Some, and he among them, thought he was also the most handsome and best-dressed European man of letters; the ablest

navigator in the equivocal and the treacherous waters of pre-War Italy (Fascist), post-War Italy (Communist and Catholic), as well as in Paris; a society lion with exquisite and irresistible manners; the most reckless and adventurous *avventuriero*; and a reborn Casanova who could mesmerise all (well, many) women into supine acquiescence. The puzzling thing is that, in a way, he really was what he thought he was. He had all those rare qualities and talents (almost all, anyway), yet somehow he was never able to reach the immortal heights he thought he deserved, to be what he dreamed of being, the dominator of Italian, Latin, and possibly European letters, the Thomas Mann of Italy, the masterful weaver of political intrigues, always on the side of the winners on the day of victory, and, at the same time, the great and dazzling star of cosmopolitan society, the *Casanova de nos jours*.

In reality everybody who knew and had to deal with him was slightly afraid and kept him at a safe distance. He made most people uneasy; he was trying so hard. The literary world and the best journalists conceded that at best he was a brilliant juggler with words, a skilful craftsman who could

CURZIO MALAPARTE, who died twenty-five years ago, has not been forgotten. In Italy new books about him continue to appear, and a film made by Liliana Cavani about liberated Naples, based on his novel "La Pelle" ("The Skin"), has just had its European première in Paris.

write with ease in any of several fashionable styles, a maker of ephemeral verbal fireworks. The most authoritative critics took little notice of him. The really *haut monde*, the placid *vieux riches* or ancient aristocratic families, did not even know who he was. They read very few books, of any kind, had not a particularly high opinion of writers in general, and thought him (when they thought about him at all) a *poseur*, a *cabot*, somebody one saw at the Acqua Santa golf club or in good restaurants, a man too well-dressed, shifty, clever, too eager to please.

Admittedly his only real world-wide success (the one success which matched his expectations) was with women. They fell in love with him in droves. He bedded most of them and some were extraordinarily distinguished and beautiful. His secret of seduction was that of the most popular *demi-mondaines* during the Second Empire. He (like them) was a frigid, reluctant lover. He could sometimes keep an infatuated woman chaste for months until she was driven out of her mind. A few of his ex-mistresses dejectedly admitted that, in the end, the results were not worth the long wait. Maybe he was too much in love with himself, too preoccupied with his work, too flighty, too easily bored and distracted to be a substantial lover.

Above all he was preoccupied with his physical fitness and youthful appearance. He was tall and slim. He exercised strenuously every day, and ate sparingly. Yet, in spite of his athletic activities, he did not look particularly manly, not unlike many men tensely busy cultivating their bodies and their fame. His slick Japanese-black straight hair and his chubby cheeks reminded me of a Neapolitan boy groomed for his first communion.

ONE OF HIS BEST and most indulgent friends, the painter Orfeo Tamburi—a good painter who was close to him for thirty years, in Rome, Paris, Forte dei Marmi, (where Malaparte once had a villa) and Capri (where he later built another, strawberry-coloured, on a rock a few yards from the deep blue sea, which he left to the Communist Chinese Writers' Union after his death) has recently written a little book of random recollections called *Malaparte come me* (Editoriale Nuova, Milano). The title echoes those of books by Malaparte himself (*Donna come me*, for instance), and merely means "as I saw him", or "as filtered though my sensibility."

Tamburi met Malaparte in 1937. The painter was young (27), penniless, patient, confident, and tenacious. Malaparte was older (39), had had a falling out with the régime, and was just back from a stay on the island of Lipari where he had been exiled for some time. He was not an anti-Fascist; nor was he a Fascist. His disgrace was dismissed at the time by real anti-Fascists as merely "an

incident in the career of a courtier." In order to regain favour he founded *Prospettive*, an "avant-garde" magazine—with Fascist subventions—to rally a few loose and naive intellectuals to the Mussolini régime.

It was printed in Florence, and part of it on straw paper (the kind used by butchers), a daring thing at the time. All the titles were hand-lettered by Tamburi in bold brush strokes. Tamburi was the graphic artist, make-up editor, illustrator, general factotum, and office boy. He had to go to Florence every month to oversee the publication of each number. His pay was minimal, always in arrears, barely sufficient to survive on and buy paint brushes, and canvas.

Tamburi adored Malaparte but, like a good portrait-painter, saw him with his defects, tics, and fixations, and he has not tried to embellish him. Of course, he always realised there were two Malapartes: the character he impersonated all his waking life to the very day of his death, and the secret man nobody knew. The secret man "was a wonderful friend" (Tamburi writes in the introduction), "simple, cordial, generous, constant in his moods, always affable, and respectful of other people's humours. I don't think that, in evoking episodes not always flattering to him, I degrade our friendship." And then he fills the rest of the slim volume with episodes illustrating the unpleasant traits of the strange character impersonated by his dear friend.

Malaparte (as Tamburi recalls) plastered his hair to his head with *gomina argentina*, took hours to choose a necktie and a shirt to wear with it, and sometimes discarded the suit he had on because it did not go with the tie or shirt he had chosen. Really, Tamburi admits, he looked like a chauffeur, on his day off, wearing his Sunday best. Malaparte was a miser, his best friend says, a man who always pretended he was down to his last penny and used his personable arts to get anybody else to pay the bill. Once, when the hungry young Tamburi was his guest at Forte, Malaparte sent him to bed without dinner, as there was nothing to eat in the house, then sneaked out and had a wonderful meal in an expensive restaurant all by himself.

Tamburi recalls sadly that Malaparte was a bully with the weak and insignificant, prudent with the strong and powerful. Worse than that, he was incapable of inventing anything, had no ideas of his own, and merely turned into artful prose café-conversations with friends and common gossip. (Vincenzo Cardarelli, an elderly poet and a famous Via Veneto wit, once said: "Give him an adjective and he'll write a book.") His two most famous novels are nothing more than brilliant collections of all the tales and jokes that were current in Italy during the War, and these he related as his own personal experience or invention. (Not being a man of literary culture, Tamburi does not know that

some of the finest writers of all times have done the same. . . .)

Above all Malaparte tried to squeeze publicity for himself out of the smallest event in his life. Everything—the books he wrote, his newspaper polemics, his political decisions, his love affairs, the scandals he provoked—was designed to shock the *bien pensants* and make people (and the press) talk about him. His darkest masterpiece was, perhaps, the exploitation of the suicide of an American girl he was bored with and had abandoned without money. She took barbiturates and swam naked far out to sea at Ostia; some fishermen rescued her and brought her to a hospital where she was in a coma for days. Malaparte played the role of the heart-broken lover to the hilt. He wept, tore his hair, declared life was not worth living without his one great love. He embraced Peter Ustinov (who had come consolingly to dine with him one night), cried on his shoulder, and sobbed: "I'm a wretched man, Peter . . . this girl is dying . . . she is *dying* . . . and there's nothing I can do to save her. . . ." Ustinov, who knew nothing of the matter, looked at him half-amused and half-amazed, and wondered "Has Malaparte gone mad?" After the girl had died (and been buried at Malaparte's expense), Malaparte told Tamburi: "It didn't go at all badly. . . . Think of the publicity I got."

Debts, avarice, vanity, cowardice, social climbing, hunger for fame were tiny and negligible defects when compared to Malaparte's political cynicism. He was an orthodox Fascist when it suited him, a dissident Fascist when necessary, a quasi-Communist the moment Naples was liberated (and he with it). He immediately wrote pseudonymous articles for *L'Unità*, the Party-line newspaper. He signed them "*Gianni Strozzi*." Gianni was a democratic nickname, like Carter's "Jimmy", and Strozzi was a Florentine aristocratic surname, suitable for a snob.

In the end, in 1957, prominent Communist ideologues and Catholic theologians alternated at his death-bed. Nobody knew to which of the two churches he had finally become converted; and indeed both claimed him after his death. Around his bed he kept images of miraculous saints, Madonnas, holy relics, and portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Gramsci.

ALL THIS, of course, should have little significance from a literary point of view. So many of the world's greatest writers have had repulsive personalities. Shouldn't Malaparte be judged by his books and not by his neckties, social successes, wavering politics, or love affairs? But somehow, I think, his case is different. His best books are good but not good enough, not the books which people who valued his remarkable talents

thought he could have written, precisely because all the defects which tainted his life managed to spoil his work too. What were the causes of his failure or, perhaps, inadequate success?

The first is his date of birth. He was born in 1898, too late to be a celebrity of the *belle époque* (he was a mere scrawny adolescent in 1914 when the *belle époque* ended); and too early to be "one of us", a contemporary. To us, born ten or fifteen years later, he looked like a survivor, a curious anachronism. He belonged to the end of an era of frenetic narcissists, men and women who really thought they had made history and changed the course of European civilisation with one book, a ballet, an opera, an exhibition of paintings, a speech, a few poems, a drama (writing it, acting in it). Of course, sometimes it happened. There were a few geniuses, larger than life. But most of the others were mediocrities infatuated with themselves, and their names are now known only to their relatives and a few academic specialists. Not a few of the specimens of the species were Italian. I think of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti or (the greatest) Gabriele d'Annunzio.

Malaparte was fatally influenced by d'Annunzio. He was educated in his boarding school, the "Cicognini" in Prato, where the Poet was naturally considered the patron saint. Obviously he was the ideal model for the young ambitious student with a literary bent. D'Annunzio was the Poet, the juggler with rare words who had really nothing much to say, but also the international dandy, the great lover, and, at the end, a War Hero. (In this Malaparte preceded him; he faked his birth certificate and ran to the defence of France as a 16-year-old volunteer *Garibaldino* in 1914, when Italy was still neutral; d'Annunzio only entered the Italian army the year after). D'Annunzio reached the height of his fame, social as well as literary, in Paris; Malaparte tried to do much the same but with more dubious results. D'Annunzio, who had been elected a Right-wing deputy, one day dramatically crossed the hall of Parliament and said: "I now move to the Left—that's where Life is!" (but he did not stay there for long). Malaparte, who was never elected deputy, had been a close friend of Right-wing Fascists, the Ciano coterie, who protected and helped him; but as soon as possible, when it was obvious the Fascists had lost the War, he too went to the Left. In short, both men were *art nouveau* novelties, Nietzschean supermen,

who valued words more than ideas. The misfortune was that Malaparte was thirty or forty years late.

PERHAPS ANOTHER EXPLANATION of his character, his outrageous behaviour, and dubious success is to be found in his ancestry. His real name was Kurt Erich Suckert. (The literary pseudonym he later chose, "Buonaparte" turned upside down, was a typical gesture.) The father was a blond and bearded Saxon, who looked something like the first Kaiser Wilhelm—he was a machinery technician who had been called to Prato, near Florence, one of Europe's great textile centres, as an industrial expert, and he became the owner of one of the best mills in town. Malaparte's mother was Italian, to be sure; but from Brianza (a small section of Lombardy, north of Milano close to the Swiss border) where the people are silent, tenacious, enterprising, and hard-working, definitely "Northerners", and indeed more like the Bavarians, Tyrolese, and Swiss than other Italians. How much of Malaparte was Teuton and how much Latin? "Was he Tuscan or German?", Tamburi asks. "The national characteristics were mixed in kindness, avarice, and generosity." Yet "how do we explain his racism; and his cruelties? . . . and, with it all, his chivalrous sense of friendship?"

Evidently Malaparte's adolescent efforts to free himself from his father's influence inevitably became a struggle against Germanic bourgeois virtues: rigour, orderliness, discipline, loyalty, veracity, submission to authority. He tried hard to impersonate some anti-German figure out of Tacitus, some imaginary Italian.

What happened to him is described by the proverb about the Italianate Englishman: "*Inglese italianato, diavolo incarnato*." No Italian is really as free from moral rules as the foreigner imitating him. Not all Italians are cheats, thieves, liars, traitors, indiscriminate fornicators, cowards, intriguers, poisoners, and the like. Those who are surely are not all of these things at the same time, and not all the time. In fact there are unwritten rules, unperceived by even the most perceptive foreigners, which determine Italian behaviour, without which the country would be quite uninhabitable. The *Inglese italiano* ignores them. He thinks that absolutely everything is licit in Italy. He usually ends up badly.

DISCUSSION

Searching for a Non-Marxist Alternative

A Tory Critique of Haseler's Social Democracy

By Ray Whitney

SDP I HAVE ALWAYS enjoyed discussing politics with my old friend Stephen Haseler and I hope it will not damage his career in the Social Democratic Party when I say that it has never seemed to me that there was any significant difference between us on the sort of Britain we want to help build.

It was therefore with more than usual pleasure that I received my January copy of *ENCOUNTER*. The cover announced that Haseler was to deal with the most intriguing political issue of the hour: "What do the Social Democrats Stand For?" This is a question we sceptical Tories have been asking for many months, and not even all the diversionary and obfuscatory tactics of the SDP legions in the media will be able to stop it being asked by the British people over the next two years. Now we were promised the answer by a member of the Policy Committee of the SDP.

Disappointment set in as soon as I turned to p.7 and I began to wonder whether a reader less well disposed towards *ENCOUNTER* might be moved to bring a charge under the Trade Descriptions Act. Instead of the goods as advertised—an authoritative statement of SDP beliefs—Mr Haseler was offering a piece with a much more equivocal title: "Can the Social Democrats Devise Policies for Political Power?"

At once we were back in what has quickly become the familiar territory of Gang-of-Four ambiguity. Were we merely to be told more about

SDP ploys to get into office or given an insight into what they would actually do if these ploys are successful? The first is something which is already clear enough to most of us. SDP tactics are to concentrate on attacking the other parties (while self-righteously condemning "adversary politics") and avoid spelling out concrete policies, recognising that to do so would generate serious tensions within its own ranks and with the Liberals and would soon begin to cause wheels to fall off the present happily irresponsible bandwagon.

Mr Haseler's five thousand words of "suggestions and reflections" are a fine demonstration of just how difficult it is going to be to devise a distinctive set of principles or credible programme for any new force in British politics. He should know—he has been trying to do so for a long time. Six years and more before Shirley Williams was still saying "A centre party would have no roots, no principles, no philosophy"—and David Owen that "Only Labour can defeat Mrs Thatcher . . . I am not interested in the soggy centre . . . I am a socialist"—Stephen Haseler and his (and my) friends in the Social Democratic Alliance had already embarked on the search.

This article, with its surprising factual errors, is further evidence that sensible policies still elude them. An ability to win mid-term by-elections and lead opinion polls clearly has a far slighter link with the possession of a coherent programme than those of us who are committed to the success of the democratic process in Britain would wish.

FOR DECADES PAST, three particular traps have proved to have an irresistible lure for many British politicians and political writers and Haseler falls regularly into all of them—an inaccurate use of key words; a fixation with an often out-dated concept of class; and a marked tendency to refuse to face reality when it is too inconvenient or difficult to deal with.

Let me consider a few examples. The problems with words usually arise not from slovenliness but

RAY WHITNEY (*educated at Wellingborough, Sandhurst, and London University*) was a member of the Diplomatic Service, serving in Peking, Buenos Aires, and Dacca, before his election as Conservative Member of Parliament for Wycombe in 1978. He is Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Employment Committee of the Conservative Backbenchers.

from a Humpty-Dumpty-like determination to make them mean whatever seems most palatable at the time. The use of the term "socialist" is always the big test. Until quite recently, for practical purposes this could usually be accepted as meaning the current policies of the Labour Party. Now that there are at least three Labour Parties, one of them being the SDP, this definition no longer works. Yet many of the SDP still hanker after something they call "socialism" and Haseler reveals that the only cavil a socialist friend of his has with David Owen's latest book is its title.

In his Social Democratic Alliance days, when things were pure and simple, Haseler was scathing about the word "socialism" and those who used it:

"It is a word not of the people, as any good democratic word should be, but of the élites who talk on behalf of the people."¹

How right he was then! Now, with his new élitist friends, he has to be more circumspect and so seeks to concentrate our attention on the significance of the word "social"—

"We would not have included the word 'Social' in our party name merely by some accident of contemporary political nomenclature. . . ."

What does he mean? I know of no contemporary politician who does not wish to see changes in our society, and Mr Haseler offers nothing unique or special in the way of social reform. And how accurate is his assessment of the scale of the problem and its importance as an element in the totality of our national malady? Haseler says

"We have not really been able to open our society to the talents; considerable social constraints remain upon enterprise and merit."

While no doubt there is, and will always remain, scope for further improvement, I wonder whether Britain is now significantly worse in these respects than other countries. Are these not, to use Haseler's own words, "the banal and cliché-ridden social criticisms of the '50s and '60s"?

He calls for "a serious dash for social reform and modernisation." This is precisely what the present Government has been engaged in since May 1979. Of course, it has allowed itself to be caricatured as set, to the exclusion of all else, on some ferociously "monetarist" course; but, in reality, it has been much less ferocious than that followed by the "good" Social Democrats of West Germany. Given the economic problems inherited by Margaret Thatcher and her colleagues it was inevitable that the economy needed priority attention and that efforts to cure our weaknesses would run into enormous difficulties and attract most attention. Yet

years before Messrs Bellini, Finnis, and the others quoted with such approval by Stephen Haseler, Keith Joseph was already pointing out (in *Monetarism is Not Enough*) the many other changes which are needed before we can create a healthy and confident society in this country.

Thus the Government has pushed ahead with the right to buy council houses (as favoured by Mr Haseler but which an SDP policy document says it would abolish), and improved mobility by changes in the Rent Act. It has enacted a whole series of measures which now make it easier to start up and develop a business in Britain than in any country in the world. It has introduced the assisted-places scheme to help bright children from poorer families and has stopped the destruction of the grammar and direct-grant schools (which was proceeding at such a pace under Mrs Shirley Williams that it was said of her that she was responsible for the creation of more independent private schools than anyone since Edward VI).

Yet Mr Haseler asks: "Whatever possessed the powers-that-be to abolish the great mediating social institution—the ladder of social mobility—the grammar schools?" He should direct that question to the powers-that-were-and-hope-to-be-again, Mrs Williams and her collaborators. Indeed the grammar schools, despite his well-justified enthusiasm for them, are a subject on which Mr Haseler's grasp of facts is at its shakiest. He is quite wrong to assert that they were a "major contribution" of Butler's 1944 Education Act. Many grammar schools were founded centuries earlier but the last burgeoning came with the 1902 Act passed by Balfour's Conservative Government which encouraged local authorities to set up county grammar schools.

NOW TO "CLASS", Stephen Haseler's favourite topic—even obsession. It is something I have frequently discussed with him, fortified by my own impeccably working-class credentials. No one could deny that class remains a special feature and problem of British life, and I would also accept that in recent years there has been a serious attempt by political activists to exacerbate class differences and negate the effects of all the egalitarian moves since the War. Yet it is still possible to get "class" out of perspective as a political factor, and I believe that Haseler's own intensive study of the subject has caused him to do so. Anthony Crosland, R. H. Tawney, or Richard Hoggart writing in 1958 are not infallible guides to the political questions of 1982.

Despite his subtleties, he ends up with a fundamentally simplistic and misleading perception of our social relationships. For example, he describes

¹ Stephen Haseler, *The Death of British Democracy*. (1976) p. 157.

last year's Conservative Party conference as a "feudal-minded audience of aristocratic provenance." I do not know when Mr Haseler last went to a Tory conference, but he could not be more ludicrously wide of the mark. The word "aristocratic" appears a number of times in the article with the implication that the Tories are the aristocratic party. That most aristocrats consider they have nowhere else to go is probably true, but it is clear that they can have no sort of dominant role in the party of Margaret Thatcher and Norman Tebbit. Indeed, as the perspicacious Edward Pearce points out in the same issue of ENCOUNTER, the Prime Minister's critics within the Conservative ranks tend to come from those in the "inheriting class" who believe in a measure of Keynesian reflation and "something which is called compassion, in order to keep all the brutes in their place"—Social Democrat policies, in fact.

HASELER'S ASSESSMENT of another group in our society is equally questionable—as well as revealing, for all he has to say about the SDP's alleged "classlessness", his own acceptance of the old stereotypes. He believes that the votes of "the vast army of skilled British workers . . . in essence deserted by Labour as it has moved Left . . . *ought* [his italics] to be secured" for the new party. Why *ought* they? What prescriptive right to the votes of skilled or any other manual workers can be claimed by any of the Gang-of-Four? On the contrary, the instincts of the ordinary man and woman are much closer to those of Margaret Thatcher than Shirley Williams.

FOR US BRITISH in 1982, a more damaging weakness than our class attitudes is our special propensity to refuse to face reality. Our national greatness was built on our pragmatism, but for over a century now our capacity to relate cause and effect has been slipping away. Many factors have played a part—the *rentiers* of the Industrial Revolution could indulge their consciences free of material pressures; Socialism and Keynesianism have bitten deep; we have avoided the dreadful

purgative of defeat in war; by winning political power, our trade-union leaders have been able (for a remarkably long time) to defy the laws of economics.

Haseler's article offers no evidence that he—and still less his SDP colleagues—is ready to help lead the country back to the realities. He shies away from the advocacy of any serious economic policy (and even, justifiably, derides the theories on incomes policies re-heated by Professor Layard to the loud approval of a number of SDP spokesmen a few months ago). His calls for "decentralisation" are vague and seem to ignore all the lessons of recent experience. He skates over fundamental divisions within the SDP and the Alliance—such as the Liberal Assembly vote on Unilateralism and the anti-Americanism among some of his leading collaborators.

Perhaps most serious of all is Haseler's failure even to examine the problems caused by our public sector, despite his recognition of the need to "deal with obvious excesses of corporate power." It is now very clear that much of the resistance to the Government's efforts to reform and modernise our economy has come from the bureaucrats and Nationalised Industry Chairmen (many of whom are reported to be supporters and even fund-raisers for the SDP). When, for example, Sir Peter Parker boasted about the 11% wage fix in August (which subsequently and predictably came to pieces) he spoke of "the railway community"—which he had hoped would then go on and lift another £700 million or so from the rest of us. His "community" was the Rail Board and the Unions; the traveller and the taxpayer came nowhere. That is the sort of unreality which has to be changed.

IT LOOKS increasingly likely that Labour is in its death throes as a serious political force. The Left has it so firmly by the throat that the withering away to a Marxist rump may now take only two years rather than ten. The British people, therefore, need a non-Marxist alternative to the Conservative Party; and it may be that the SDP will be destined to fill that role.

But before it can do so satisfactorily, Stephen Haseler and his friends must offer something a great deal better than they have produced so far.

LETTERS

Militant Language

IN CONNECTION WITH your series on the Uses of Language Today, may I call your attention to a remark by Mr Arthur Scargill, president-elect of Britain's National Union of Mineworkers, attacking his predecessor Mr Joe Gormley for having advised miners, in the *Daily Express*, to think twice about voting for a strike which might be political.

"His use of the capitalist press to express his support of the Coal Board's pay offer and influence his members to oppose their own union can only be described as collaborationist."

"*The capitalist press*"? Standard Marxist jargon. "*Their own union*"? Their own union's elected national officials: the members are the union—can they oppose themselves? "*Can only be described*"? Only? How about "be described as sensible"?

And "*collaborationist*"? So now we know. The National Coal Board=Nazi occupation authorities. Mr Scargill and friends=the Resistance. And industrial relations=World War II.

GEORGE WILCOX

London

Gide & Pasternak

ONE CAN ONLY be grateful for the painstaking research which enabled Herbert Lottman to offer readers so many more vivid details than we have had before on the case of "André Gide's Return" (ENCOUNTER, January). But he confines the Soviet counter-offensive to the nasty turn which Ilya Ehrenburg, always quick off the mark when it came to official hatchet-jobs, made in 1936. But actually almost the whole of the Soviet literary élite was involved in the denunciation of Gide. There was a Party-inspired "protest letter", based on the Writers' Union condemnation of Gide's just-published *Retour de l'URSS*, and everybody in Moscow and Leningrad—with one exception—jumped into line.

The exception was Boris Pasternak. True, he had made his peace with the new Stalinist line; collaborated in the Soviet Writers Congress of 1934; allowed himself (at André Malraux' request) to be paraded at the Paris Writers' Congress which marked the new Popular Front line in the West; and indeed had put his signature on one infamous Party-inspired letter (*Pravda*, 21 August 1936) which demanded the death penalty for the accused in Stalin's great "Show Trial" (Zinoviev, Kamenev, et al.).

But apparently enough was enough. The letter against Gide was one which he refused to sign; evidently he had done "his last act of obeisance" (as Professor Ronald Hingley has recorded).

"... Pasternak offered the excuse that he had not read Gide's book. Nor had most of the signatories, and that only made Pasternak's action all the more outrageous. The loyal citizen protests because he has been ordered to protest, not because he is familiar with the material that has purportedly provoked his spontaneous indignation." (*Nightingale Fever: Russian Poets in Revolution*, 1982, p. 209)

There was another collective protest letter shortly thereafter, this time applauding the execution of Marshal Tukhachevsky and other leading generals. When Pasternak indicated that he would withhold his signature, the personal danger was very great; and, as he said many years later, "I do not understand to this day why I was not arrested there and then. ..."

JEAN-PAUL RICHARD

Paris

Social Democrats

STEPHEN HASELER ("Can the Social Democrats Devise Policies for Political Power?", ENCOUNTER, January) lets a mouse of a solution emerge from a mountain of analysis of "the British disease." He argues convincingly that Britain's poor economic performance has less to do with the various economic strategies adopted since 1945 than with the persistence of social attitudes and institutions which inhibit her ability to compete in the world market in the late 20th century. But his practical proposals for changing these social attitudes and institutions are disappointing.

Mr Haseler urges the SDP to adopt a strategy for social modernisation to accompany any particular economic strategy. Britain must become a more "open" and "classless" society. The twin bogeys he identifies are the vestiges of the old aristocracy and the conservative trade unions. To slay them both he calls for primary elec-

Calvinism Today



New York City

CALVIN used to be the name of an austere 16th-century French theologian. Today it's a verb. Women have been Calvinized. Men are getting Calvinized too. The English language has been transformed.

But Calvinization is less important to the de-Klein of grammar than to the rise of fashion. In an age when designers are society's shamans, affixing their names to everything from sofas to chocolates to tea-pots, the hottest label of all belongs to a shy 39-year-old millionaire named Calvin Klein. With 15 million of his jeans Calvinizing American backsides last year alone and more elegant designs draping the limbs of Jackie Onassis, Candice Bergen and Farrah Fawcett, the Bronx-born Klein has become the most successful designer the U.S. has ever produced.

"Coping with success is very difficult. You start thinking maybe you don't deserve it", he reflects. "Then you come to realize how hard you've worked." Which just may mean that Calvin has more in common with his 16th-century namesake than anyone ever suspected.

"PEOPLE" MAGAZINE

tions, decentralisation, selling council houses, and secret postal ballots for trade unions.

What is wrong with these solutions? *First*, they seem disproportionately modest in relation to the problem posed. *More important*, they suggest that the analysis itself is fundamentally misconceived. Mr Haseler has entered the unwinnable game (for a moderate at least) of trying to be more "radical" than his opponents. But it must be remembered that the SDP is a centrist party which owes its very existence to widespread public disillusionment with the "Radical" Left and Right. It may be possible for the new party to come forth as a "radical" hammer of the entrenched trade unions; but it

will not be so easy to excel the Bennites as champions of a "more democratic" and "classless" Britain.

The SDP now has an ideal chance to inject a greater degree of honesty and realism into political debate. It certainly must work out a programme to modernise British society, but this need not imply acceptance of the classical radical and socialist analyses of democracy and classlessness. Indeed, I believe that one of the keys to the long-lasting success of the SDP will be its ability to withstand the temptation to chase after ideological cure-alls.

JOHN W. MASON

Birmingham

The Press & the Viet Nam War

An Exchange with Robert Elegant—By PETER BRAESTRUP

AS A SOMETIME (1966-69, 1972) reporter in Viet Nam, as a critic of media performance (*Big Story*) in Viet Nam, and as an amateur historian of the war, I was a bit surprised by the thesis of Robert Elegant's "How to Loose a War" in the August 1981 ENCOUNTER.

Does he really believe that "the outcome of the Viet Nam war was decided not on the battlefield but on the printed page and, above all, on the television screen"? The "political pressures built up by the media", he states flatly, "made it quite impossible for Washington to maintain even the material and moral support that would have enabled the Saigon régime to continue effective resistance."

This is a strong claim. It echoes the past claims of some champions of network television, who argue that CBS, NBC, and ABC brought the realities of the war into the living room, and thereby turned America against it. Yet, there is no empirical evidence that shows any firm link between media coverage and trends in public opinion. We simply do not *know* much about the causes of change in public opinion.

That Washington politicians, notably Lyndon Johnson and his foes in Congress, were extremely sensitive to what they saw as the effects of Viet Nam news coverage is well documented, and they variously sought to counter or exploit that coverage on occasion. But that is not what Mr Elegant says.

WHAT DOES Mr Elegant present in the way of chapter and verse to show that US news coverage of the war was biased, as he charged, against the allies and in favour of Hanoi? Not much. He quotes the Boston-based anti-war *New York Times* columnist, Anthony Lewis, who, aside from a brief and rather unfortunate 1972 visit to Hanoi, never covered the war. He whacks away at author William (*Sideshow*) Shawcross, a young Briton who happily blamed Kissinger and Nixon for the genocide in Communist Cambodia, but, like Mr Elegant, never sojourned for long in the war zone. He cites a bohemian *Esquire* writer, Mike Herr, as a guide to mainline press corps motivations. He expresses surprise that two leftist, anti-war journals of opinion, *The Nation* and *The New Republic*, would not print his stuff. He cites, but does not explain, certain troubles over Indo-China with his bosses

at the *Los Angeles Times*, hardly an anti-war organ.

In the course of an essay of more than 12,000 words, he fails to present any specific examples of the consistent anti-war bias he perceives as permeating the regular news coverage from Viet Nam in 1962-73. He gives us a few hazy anonymous anecdotes. But he does not name any of the sinners in Saigon, or quote their tainted output. Is Mr Elegant lazy? Or are we to accept stream of consciousness as analysis?

In my office, I have a complete set of the Pentagon's daily news clipping file ("Current News") for the 1965-73 Viet Nam period. It is not all-inclusive, but it has most of the major American print media stories out of Viet Nam. In contrast to my research for *Big Story*, covering the 1968 Tet period (an extreme case of press malpractice in crisis), I have not done a day-by-day content analysis of the print news output from the war zone. But I have skimmed enough of it to establish in my own mind three points:

(1) The overall output was highly uneven in quality, exhibiting a penchant for drama and excitement, as in all Western journalism.

(2) If anything, the Page One "hard news" coverage in Viet Nam was dominated by official communiqués, statements or explanations, as it usually is.

(3) There was no *consistent* bias in the Saigon reporting; the war was taken as a given, and most often analysed, when analysed at all, in the framework of official US claims and stated goals.

Certainly there were gaping holes and changing fads in the print coverage. Viet Nam became a "home town" story, with American G.I.s as prime actors, after 1965. As Elegant states, many of the American newsmen in Viet Nam—and their bosses at home—were singularly unprepared to cope with the complexities of the long, ever-changing Indo-China experience. Television sought "good film", i.e., melodrama, usually at the expense of "context." But during my years in Viet Nam, I found few reporters who, even as they criticised allied performance (or, more often, quarrelled with US officialdom), saw the Vietnamese Communists, however impressive as fighters, as the "good guys." Such sentiments were strong only among Western pundits and academics far from the scene.

IN MY VIEW, much of the confusion in the press at home stemmed from chronic confusion in Washington. Lyndon Johnson refused to design or support a decisive strategy for winning the war. Peace, not victory, became his goal. This ambiguity led to "credibility gaps", policy contradictions, and easy opportunities for LBJ's foes.

In 1969, Richard Nixon, stuck with a four-year-old conflict, decided not to try to win it, but to slowly withdraw all US forces while seeking an illusory "peace with honour" at the negotiating table. Nixon's presidency—and the country's morale—were gravely weakened by Watergate.

Under these conditions, with Hanoi still free to strike from Cambodia and Laos, the end was inevitable. To blame the press—or even the solemn dramatists of TV news—for the loss of the Viet Nam war may provide an emotionally satisfying polemic, but it does not fit the realities. The blame lies elsewhere.

PETER BRAESTRUP

*Wilson Quarterly,
Washington D.C.*

AS AN UNREPENTANT ADMIRER of Peter Braestrup's painstaking examination of press coverage of the Tet Offensive, which he did not find perfect by any means, I am sorry if he feels I poached on his private preserve in venturing to put forward my own views on the role of the media in Viet Nam. Surely the subject is broad enough and important enough to allow of more than one commentator.

The proper qualifications of such commentators could give rise to interminable debate. However, Mr Braestrup's throw-away remark that I "never sojourned long in the war zone" requires a correction, since it questions my credentials, and implies that I am less worthy than he to comment. The first night I spent in Saigon early in 1955 was, coincidentally, the beginning of the French-sponsored revolt of sectarian private armies against the régime of Ngo Dinh Diem. On my last visit, early in 1975, the war was still pursuing its gory course. During that extended period, I covered action by American, Vietnamese, and Korean troops.

Is one better qualified to write about the press on Viet Nam by a cumulative stay of, I believe, three years over two decades or by a stay of, it appears, three years concentrated in the late 1960s and early 1970s? Is one better qualified if one observed Viet Nam in the context of Asia and its own Confucian society or if one observed Viet Nam in the context of the US? Does Mr Braestrup's statistical approach lead to irrefutable truth or are the observations of 20 years a better guide? I cannot say for certain, though perspective is usually gained by the long view.

A further personal point, since Mr Braestrup criticises my character ("Is Mr Elegant lazy?")¹ as well as my conclusions. Surely Mr Braestrup understands that I was not engaged in a vendetta, but was seeking, as best I could, to describe the role of the press in the débâcle. It would have been not merely distracting, but offensive to cite the malfeasances of individual reporters by name. I did not wish to concentrate attention on a few—or many—"villains", but to discuss the functioning of an

institution made up of those individuals. There were, after all, few villains, but a large number of well-meaning men and women who, somehow, got it all very wrong.

Besides, most, if not all, the conversations cited were personal. It would have been an inexcusable violation of courtesy to give the source of every remark—critical or uncritical—concerning the coverage of the war. Having no personal quarrels with any of my colleagues, I wished to stimulate discussion of issues, not personalities.

AS I UNDERSTAND Mr Braestrup's substantive remarks, he agrees that public opinion, *after 1973*, made it impossible for Washington to furnish adequate *matériel* to Saigon. He then adds: "We simply do not *know* much about the causes of change in public opinion."

Mr Braestrup's logic evades me. Public opinion, after all, is based upon the information the public receives. The raw material—the great bulk of that information, however utilised—was provided by the press corps in Viet Nam and in the United States. Surely, there must be a causal relationship between that flow of information and the American public's decision that the war in Viet Nam was no longer worth fighting—if it had ever been.

I hardly disagree with Mr Braestrup's strictures of Presidents Johnson and Nixon. In the article, I was as critical of government policies as I was of the lapses of the press. The latter were, naturally, given greater attention quantitatively, since they were the subject of the essay.

One further remark on the personal elements Mr Braestrup so persistently raises. Unlike him, I found many reporters who saw the Vietnamese communists, particularly the presumably native southern National Liberation Front, as "good guys"—essentially, as well as in comparison to the "bad guys" of the various Saigon régimes. Others expressed hope of obtaining visas to North Viet Nam and, in one case, to the People's Republic of China if they pleased Hanoi.

Mr Braestrup's logic falters again in his observations on the publications and individuals I cited. I was *not* surprised that *The Nation* and *The New Republic* would not print my stuff on Viet Nam. Their demurral was noted for readers less intimately acquainted with the colouring of the American press than Mr Braestrup—and less aware of the near reverence accorded their views by the intellectual community, which, like those journals, naturally exerted influence disproportionate to its numbers (or their circulation). But it is surely pertinent that the *Los Angeles Times*, which he calls "hardly an anti-war organ", began to feel the same way. Mr Braestrup might also note that Michael Herr, whom he dismisses as a "bohemian *Esquire* writer", produced the one book most widely cited—and dramatised—as portraying the essential nature of the conflict, and the character of the press corps. I agree with him that *Despatches* was specious and unrepresentative, but the lay assessment differs.

I am surprised by Mr Braestrup's joining the chorus of self-exculpation chanted by the media since the later 1970s revealed the tragic fate the peoples of Indo-China suffered as a result of American intervention and American withdrawal.

I am particularly surprised because he again notes that the coverage of the Tet offensive, which he so brilliantly analysed, was "an extreme case of press malpractice in crisis." The fallacious reporting of Tet, which forced

¹ The short answer is: "Yes, of course, but no more than the next fellow."

Lyndon Johnson's abdication of power, unquestionably exercised the single greatest discrete influence on American public opinion. Even if all other reporting had been wholly unexceptionable, that pivotal misreporting, here indicted again by Mr Braestrup, would alone have proved my point.

The blame, of course, lies elsewhere as well. But,

within the context of international and domestic politics, the press played a decisive role in the outcome of the conflict.

ROBERT ELEGANT

Greystones
County Wicklow
Ireland

What's Happening to "Civilised Discourse"?

Encounter

Robert Elegant

A Reporter
Looks Back at
the Viet Nam
War

"Our Naivety, Our
Ignorance, Our Guilt..."

IN THE August Issue of ENCOUNTER magazine, the author Robert Elegant wrote a long piece called "A Reporter Looks Back at the Viet Nam War." This is not, though it might frightfully be just that, a report in turn on Elegant's report. Rather, it is a

report on a reaction to it so alarming, given the source, as to raise serious questions about the balance of key American media personnel.

What Elegant said in his long essay was that the time had come to review the implications of the job done by the press in reporting the Viet Nam War. He believes that the reporting by the press had consequences arguably so critical as actually to dictate the course of the war.

It is a cliché that the Viet Nam War was lost as a result of poor policy decisions, by the government primarily, as also by the military. But what was the role of the press in catalysing such decisions?

We are all more or less familiar with the apparently endless furor caused by the American incursion into Cambodia in 1970. That furor is really a creature of the press. It dated back to inflamed reports on US "escalation" and has evolved into the surrealistic notion that Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon were personally responsible for the death and mutilation of a couple of million Cambodians under Pol Pot.

Elegant, for instance, writes: "I believe it can be said (surprising as it may still sound) that South Vietnamese and American forces actually won the limited military struggle. They virtually crushed the Viet Cong in the South." Elegant goes on: "It is interesting to wonder whether Angola, Afghanistan and Iran would have occurred if Saigon had not fallen amid nearly universal odium"; that is to say if the 'Viet Nam Syndrome' for which the press (my view) was largely responsible, had not afflicted the Carter administration and paralysed American will."

REPORTS FROM VIET NAM, often by correspondents who were unschooled in the issues at stake and insensitive to the nature of the contending passions, sometimes were written apparently "to win the approbation of other correspondents in that insidiously collegial atmosphere, [producing] reporting that was remarkably homogeneous. Reporting

Viet Nam became a closed, self-generating system sustained largely by the acclaim the participants lavished on each other in almost equal measure to the opprobrium they heaped on 'the Establishment', a fashionable and very vulnerable target."

Elegant gives example after example. He cites the vulnerability of South Vietnamese corruption. He criticises impartially the policies of John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon. He cites the success of North Vietnamese intelligence penetration. He dwells on the huge differential in the passion generated by the Viet Nam War, designed to contain the communists, and the transitory passion aroused by the awful slaughters since presided over, in South Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia, by the men who won the war. The article is balanced, thoughtful, detailed, provocative, modest in tone, exploratory in mood.

ALONG COMES CBS's Morley Safer. Since I know and like the gentleman, I go down on my knees hoping that he read, that morning in October on the CBS network, lines written for him by a young, thoughtless and ignorant fanatic. He referred to Robert Elegant as "the popular novelist." One might as well refer to Dwight Eisenhower as "a well-known amateur golfer."

Robert Elegant, who has written two novels, spent 25 years as a foreign correspondent, 20 of them in South East Asia, and several years, cumulatively, in Viet Nam. He was the principal area correspondent for Newsweek magazine and won several prizes for his work. He did graduate work in oriental studies at Yale University before going to Hong Kong.

Morley Safer then compared Elegant's article with the kind of thing Joseph Goebbels would have done. Three sentences later he brought up Goebbels again, and then decided that the article by Elegant was also "appropriate for a Soviet department of agitation and propaganda." He finished by saying that ENCOUNTER magazine which, by the way, would appear on anyone's list of the the top six journals published in English, once accepted CIA money, and perhaps Elegant was after "pieces of silver left from those dark days."

The performance was shocking. Elegant's protest elicited from the head of CBS News the statement "We see no basis for any request for response time."

The episode is at least as serious as any controversy over how to allocate the blame for the bloody fiasco in Viet Nam. If such a reply is accepted as appropriate criticism, then civilized discourse, as the basis of democratic exchange, is dead.

William F. Buckley, Jr.
in the WASHINGTON POST

AUTHORS

Paul R. Hyde's work has appeared in British and foreign magazines, and has been broadcast on BBC Radio. The title story of the unpublished collection from which "Doves" is taken won the 1980 Hennessey New Irish Writing Award.

Amos Oz was born in 1939 in Jerusalem, which was at that time still under British administration. His family (since the 1890s some of them had been militant Zionists) came to Israel from Russia and Poland in the early 1930s. He attended school in Jerusalem, but at the age of 15 rebelled against the "religious and nationalistic atmosphere" and went to live on Kibbutz Hulda where he completed secondary school and later worked as a youth instructor. In 1961, after his military service, he studied philosophy and literature at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and published his first short stories. He now divides his time between writing and teaching on the Kibbutz, to which he donates all his royalties. During the Six Day War in 1967 he fought with a tank unit in Sinai, and during the Yom Kippur War (October 1973) on the Golan Heights.

Since 1967 he has published numerous articles and essays about the Arab-Israeli conflict, seeking a solution based on mutual recognition and coexistence between Israel and a Palestinian homeland: his various works have caused much controversy in Israel, and abroad. His article was translated by Nicholas de Lange.

Eugene C. Hargrove is a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at the University of Georgia, and editor of *Environmental Ethics*. He completed the translation of Luise Hausmann's manuscript during a year of post-doctoral research on Wittgenstein at the University of Vienna. He writes: "I am especially grateful to Mrs Gertrude Ilming who assisted me with the translation, to Mrs Hausmann, Mr B. F. McGuinness and Mr Rush Rhees who looked over drafts, and to Dr Adolf Hübner, head of the Österreichische Ludwig Wittgenstein Gesellschaft, who assisted me in many ways, not least in gathering information for the footnotes."

Robin Fox, whose article in ENCOUNTER ("The Cultural Animal", July 1970) attracted wide attention, still teaches anthropology at Rutgers University and is Director of Research for the Guggenheim Foundation. He followed up the ideas of that article, in collaboration with Lionel Tiger, in *The Imperial Animal* (1972) and then individually in *Encounter with Anthropology* (1975), and *Biosocial Anthropology* (1975). A detailed social anthropological study, *The Tory Islanders*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 1978. *The Red Lamp of Incest* (Hutchinson, 1980) presents a case history of the "biosocial" method and contains extensive notes and bibliography illustrating the kind of material he believes is relevant to the development of a "rational ethic of human nature." He is at present writing on the philosophy of the social sciences and is helping to set up a programme in biosocial studies at the Universidad de Los Andes in Colombia (where by practising bull-fighting he is presumably adding to his knowledge of animal behaviour).

U. A. Fanthorpe won third prize in the Arvon Foundation's 1980 poetry competition. A volume of her poems, *Side Effects*, is published by Peterloo Poets.

Raymond Aron, the French political philosopher, is a Professor of the Collège de France, and writes regularly for *L'Express*. Among his articles in ENCOUNTER are "Old Promises, & New Ideas" (September 1980), "Debate on the French Ideology" (June 1981), and "Is There a Nazi Mystery?" (June 1980).

Max Beloff received a life peerage on his recent retirement as Principal of the University College at Buckingham. His most recent book is (as co-author) *Government of the United Kingdom* (Weidenfeld, 1980).

Peter Shaw is the author of *American Patriots and the Rituals of Revolution* (Harvard University Press, 1981) and *The Character of John Adams* (Norton, 1976).

Reginald Steed is a special writer for the *Daily Telegraph*, of which he was until very recently Assistant Editor and Chief Leader Writer. He was a newspaper correspondent in Germany from January 1933 until 1935, on the Berlin staff of the *Daily Express*, and from 1952-56 as Chief Bonn Correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*.

Yasunari Takahashi, Professor of English at the University of Tokyo, has translated into Japanese the collected plays of Samuel Beckett as well as *Watt*, *Malone Dies*, and *Poems in English*. He is also the translator of Peter Brook's *Empty Space*. His own books include an analysis of the clown-figure in Beckett, a study of Lewis Carroll and Nonsense, and a collection of essays on English poetry from Donne to Eliot. In 1981 he was Visiting Professor at the University of Toronto.

Penelope Lively won the first National Book Award with her novel *Treasures of Time* (1979). Her publishers, William Heinemann, brought out *Judgment Day* in 1980, and in April publish her latest novel, *Next to Nature, Art*.

Alan Walters, Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street, has held chairs in Political Economy and in Economics at the University of Birmingham, the London School of Economics, and Johns Hopkins University. His publications include *An Introduction to Econometrics* (Macmillan, n.e. 1971), *Money and Inflation* (Penguin, 1973), and, as co-author, *Growth without Development* (1966), *Microeconomic Theory* (1977), and *Port Pricing and Investment Policy for Developing Countries* (O.U.P., 1979).

Luigi Barzini, the Italian author, politician and journalist, sat as a Liberal member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies from 1958-72. His books include *The Italians* (1964, Bantam Books 1976), *From Caesar to the Mafia* (1971) and *O, America* (Hamish Hamilton, 1977). He has contributed many pieces to ENCOUNTER, including an earlier recollection of Malaparte which appeared in the August 1960 issue.

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Life & Letters Today

Los Angeles

GAMES & NAMES: Sally Stanford, 78, a former farm girl, bootlegger and bordello madam who had a successful restaurant and served a term as mayor of Sausalito, Calif., died of a heart ailment Monday.

During Prohibition and its booming "speakeasy" bootlegging, she was convicted and sentenced to two years in the Oregon state penitentiary.

Later Miss Stanford headed for San Francisco, where she opened a hotel and was promptly arrested.

"The charge was operating a brothel", she said. "It was a lie. That hotel was straight, I was acquitted . . . But I decided that if I was going to have the name, I might as well have the game."

Business flourished although Miss Stanford was arrested 17 times. In 1949, she closed the brothel.

Her successful autobiography was called "The Lady of the House."

LOS ANGELES TIMES

London

POWER OR OFFICE?: It appals me [Lady Lorna Howard writes], to read in the newspapers the constant iteration of the opposition parties, especially the Society of Disgruntled Politicians—I beg their pardon) the SDP—of what they each intend doing when in "power."

My father, the late Stanley Baldwin always said:

"A government is *not* in power; it is in office, put there by the will of the people."

Power is a corrupting thought.

THE TIMES

Bonn

SURREAL: An economic forecast by one expert has predicted "a real growth rate of -0.97 per cent." If one tries, with a certain amount of goodwill, to improve on both the logic and the linguistics of this remarkable formulation, one could come to the result of "an unreal decline of +0.03 per cent." It reinforces one's suspicion that the introduction of a few surrealist elements into contemporary economics is the best way decently to camouflage our current crisis.

FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG

Dublin

IRISH MIST: Modern Ireland, glossy, smooth, is a country in which there are traces of the Gaelic-speaking, superstitious nation of de Valera's misty imagination [Frank Johnson writes].

On the television screen a raven-haired female Cabinet Minister was being interviewed in Gaelic, for the coverage had an alarming tendency to switch in and out of languages. Suddenly, the interviewer changed to English: "Do you think your high profile hurt you in this campaign?" The dispiriting thought crossed the mind: perhaps even in Gaelic interviews now use image, scenario, syndrome and confrontation.

THE TIMES

Melbourne

UGLY ACRONYMS: The leader of the Australian Labour Party, Bill Hayden, knowing a popular cause when he sees one, felt confident enough to dismiss the event as "an extravagant indulgence." (It has cost the Australian taxpayer about 12 million pounds sterling.)

The Melbourne "Commonwealth" conference is officially known by the ugly acronym CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, and pronounced "Chogum"). But some sour Australian wits in the Chogm "Media Centre" have let it be known that the letters really stand for "Colossal Hoax of Gigantic Magnitude."

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

London

JUST DESERT: There is a great TV programme just waiting to be made on the resurgence of Islam [Mary Kenny writes]. But it must be tackled both in religious terms, as well as political and sociological. It is perhaps difficult for us to understand that for many Muslims, Anwar Sadat is now to be envied; for the Koran tells us that the just man shall join Allah in Paradise and there "shall recline on couches lined with thick brocade, and shall dwell with bashful virgins, as fair as coral and rubies. . . ." It sure beats sitting around in the desert.

DAILY MAIL

London

THUNDER BLUNDER: Yesterday's first leader in *The Times* concerned people who try to stamp on ideas they don't like. "High Court judges do it frequently", it thundered.

By the second edition the paper had decided that High Court judges did no such thing. It was "tin pot dictators" who did it frequently.

THE GUARDIAN

Oxford

OLD MOLE: When Tom Mangold investigated the KGB and the West did he happen to notice what the Russians call their "moles"? Do they use the word krot, that is the ordinary Russian word for the animal? And if so, who used the word first, the KGB or our spies?

Mr John le Carré has told me [Robert Burchfield (Chief Editor, *The Oxford English Dictionary*) writes] in a private letter that he was not the first to use the word "mole" and he does not know who was. All Russian dictionaries are silent on the matter.

ROBERT BURCHFIELD will surely not have overlooked the second stanza of Henry Vaughan's "The World" ("*Silex Scintillans*", 1650)

... Yet dig'd the Mole, and lest his ways be found
Workt under ground,

Where he did clutch his prey, but one did see

That policie,

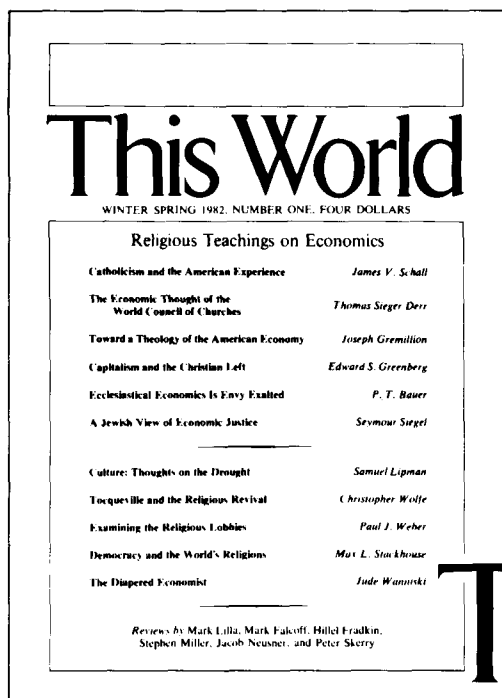
Churches and altars fed him, Perjuries

were gnats and flies,

It rain'd about him bloud and tears, but he

Drank them as free.

THE LISTENER



If you believe that,
in times like these,
we cannot discuss
major economic,
political, and cultural
issues without also
discussing their
moral and religious
underpinnings...

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